



The cost of burial is going to increase

BURIAL fees, the cost of swimming, hiring halls and some museum activities will all rise as part of a raft of increased charges for council services in Dudley.

They will come into force for a range of bereavement, leisure centre and museum services across the borough from next month.

The rises have been brought in as the authority continues its battle to meet savings of £27 million during the next three years.

Effort

Dudley Council said increases are in line with inflation and every effort has been made to minimise the rise in cost.

Some fees have also remained the same as previous years.

Costs for some bereavement services will rise by up to seven per cent. The cost of exclusive right of burial will rise from £1,610 to £1,722 for an earthen grave and from £1,809 to £1,935 for a brick grave. Cremation costs will rise from £650 to £696.

Environment boss Councillor Hilary Bills said the money would help fund improvements, adding: "Burial fees in Dudley remain very competitive and the lowest in the Black Country despite the seven per cent increase."

Town venue repair shock

DUDLEY Town Hall will be forced to close until the end of March because of urgent repair work to the ceiling.

Bosses had hoped to reopen earlier but have found out the venue will have to shut for at least three months.

Specialist contractors have been brought in after loose plaster was discovered.

Dudley Council said it was not yet known how much the repair work will cost.

Several events have had to be cancelled, moved or rescheduled.

GROUP TO TAKE OVER CIVIC HALL

A COMMUNITY group will take over the running of Brierley Hill Civic Hall from Dudley Council, as part of cost-cutting plans.

Dudley Council is looking to transfer the day-to-day management of the venue, which attracts thousands of people every year, to Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS).

Bosses says the move would save the local authority money at a time a squeeze is on local authority coffers and would help increase the number of shows staged at the hall in Bank Street.

It would be on a trial basis for 18 months beginning in February, if approved.

Community groups in the borough that use the hall are currently being consulted on the plans before a final decision is made.

As DCVS is a registered charity, it will be eligible for business rate relief enabling the money saved to be put into attracting and promoting new and bigger shows to increase visitor numbers.

Discussions

It's not yet known how much the move will save the council, which needs to make savings of at least £27 million during the next three years, but bosses say it's hoped it could potentially save a 'significant' amount in the future.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environment and culture, said: "We are in discussions with Dudley Council for Voluntary Service about the day-to-day running of Brierley Hill Civic Hall with the council maintaining ownership of the building."

"Community groups in the area are being consulted

By Heather Large

on the proposals before a final decision is made."

She added: "If approved, it will lead to more shows and visitors to the landmark building, via an established and highly regarded community organisation."

"This is all about fulfilling our promise as a community council and looking at smarter ways of delivering excellent services to the public."

In a report, detailing the proposals, Councillor Bills explained: "Initial savings can be made from the ability to claim business rate relief as DCVS are a registered charity, and this saving will allow some reinvestment in marketing and promotions resources for the venue in an attempt to drive new business and usage for the hall."

An average of around 180,000 visitors attend shows at Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall, Dudley Town Hall and the Cornbow Hall in Halesowen each year.

In the summer, the council took on extra curators to help cope with an increase in bookings.

Brierley Hill Civic Hall is currently the largest theatre in the borough with the biggest stage and an orchestra pit.

Festive toy joy in store for youngsters



Sainsbury's store manager Kevin Healy with staff and FAST team members alongside hundreds of donated toys

MORE than 180 toys and gifts will be on their way to needy families across the borough thanks to Dudley Council and Sainsbury's supermarkets.

The council's Family and Adolescent Support Team (FAST), who support families who are having difficulties, teamed up with Sainsbury's at Amblecote and Merry Hill to run an annual toy appeal.

Staff and customers donated over 180 toys and gifts towards a Christmas party that was held for the families and children supported by FAST. Those who were unable to attend the party will have their gifts delivered.

Council children's services boss Councillor Tim Crumpton said: "Thanks to the generosity of shoppers and the kind efforts of staff at Sainsbury's we are able to make sure children and young people have gifts and a Christmas party which so many of us take for granted."

Impressive

Store manager at Sainsbury's Amblecote, Kevin Healy, said: "We thank our customers at Amblecote and Merry Hill once again for getting behind this good cause and donating gifts in support of the impressive work of

Dudley's family and adolescent support team."

The FAST team has been running the appeal since 2004. The team is currently working with 225 families and 410 children up to the age of 16.

The workers help to encourage families and support them through difficult times.

Parents can attend support groups where they can share their experiences with other parents to create strategies to deal with their own situations. The team also provides support for children on the Child Protection Register and works directly with adolescents.

Police in search for gun after man shot

DETECTIVES are investigating a fight between two gangs which ended with a man being shot.

Two men were arrested following the drama which took place in Nimmings Road, Blackheath.

Gdens and homes were searched by police as they hunted for the weapon.

The injured man, aged 32, was shot in the leg and was taken to hospital for treatment.

West Midlands Police have appealed for witnesses to the clash to come forward.

After the incident, residents were prevented from driving in or out of the street for more than 24 hours as officers undertook a painstaking search for evidence. But police confirmed that, despite the searches, no weapon has been found.

The men who were questioned by police are aged 27 and 29 and are both from Halesowen. They have been bailed until the New Year while inquiries continue.

The incident has left residents shocked with some saying it was out of character for the area. Sunjinder Johal, who runs the Drink Stop off licence, said: "I'm so surprised this has happened. We hope it's a one-off."

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101.

Body found after blaze

A WOMAN died in a flat fire in Netherton.

West Midlands Fire Service attended the Wells Court flats on St John's Road on December 9 after reports of a blaze on the fourth floor at around 4.20pm.

The fire was already out on arrival and the woman's body was discovered. Deb Edmonds, of West Midlands Police, said: "Her death does not appear to be suspicious and a post mortem will be carried out in due course."

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CONTENTS	
Peter Rhodes	4
Feature	6
Grand Panto	8
Reviews	12
Robbers Jailed	13
Memory Lane	14
Christmas TV	17 - 19
New Year TV	20 & 21
Motoring	23
Sport	31 & 32
CONTACT US	

CONTACT US

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Arsonist jailed after daughter rescued

A WOMAN and her baby daughter had to be rescued by firefighters from an upstairs bedroom window after her partner set fire to their Tivdale home. Sean Morley, who started three fires at the property, has been jailed for five years.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how mother and child were woken by 21-year-old Morley as the semi-detached house in Elm Terrace filled with smoke.

Mr Andrew Wilkins, prosecuting, said a fire had been lit in a wheelie bin by the front door, while others had been started on a table and in a sack of clothing.

Nobody was hurt in the incident at 4am on September 10 last year but it caused £13,000 worth of damage.

The court heard Morley was linked to seven previous fires which he denied responsibility for and had not been prosecuted over, including in his grandmother's house and in a pub toilet.

Mr Tom Walking, defending, claimed that there was accidental cause to two of these. He warned: "There is a real danger in using this kind of evidence, that is both untested and untried, when deciding on the length of the appropriate sentence. He is genuinely sorry. He has lost his partner and lost contact with his daughter."

Morley, now of St Giles Avenue, Rowley Regis, pleaded guilty to arson.



Jailed — Phil Morley

Gruesome murder — son gets life sentence

Brew hopping to help charity



Sadler's brewery's Ian King, left, and Chris Sadler launch the new beer with mascot Maac

AWARD-WINNING brewery Sadler's Ales is hoping a re-launch of one of its most popular brews will take off in style to support the Air Ambulance.

The brewery in Lye, which has been brewing ales since 1990, chose to support the Midlands Air Ambulance Service as part of its commitment to giving something back to the community.

The 3.8 per cent ale, which was formally known as Jacks Pale Ale, was re-launched earlier this month under its new name 'Heli Hopper'.

The brewery is donating five per cent of every cask of Heli Hopper sold to the Air Ambulance which will help fund vitally important missions in the region.

Fifth generation master brewer Chris Sadler said: "Following a period of very positive trading, we are expanding our brewery, moving it to a new location in Lye and creating new jobs in the process. "We wanted to celebrate our success by building a relationship with a local charity and I could not think of a better cause than Midlands Air Ambulance."

A MAN from Kingswinford who murdered and dismembered his father has begun a life sentence.

Nathan Robinson, aged 26, went to 'great lengths' to mislead police before his father William Spiller's body was discovered at his Bournemouth home.

Robinson, of Larch Road, had cut up his father's body and hidden the body parts in plastic storage boxes. He later posed as his father by sending texts from his stolen mobile phone to Mr Spiller's partner and friend.

He was arrested in Pen-snett on June 18 last year, the day after police found his father's body.

Owed

Prosecutor Nigel Lickley QC said the likely motive was financial, as Robinson owed his father £36,000. He also took almost £8,000 of Mr Spiller's cash, which he used after the killing to go partying with friends.

Police discovered Mr Spiller's remains a month after the killing after receiving a "concern for welfare" call from Mr Spiller's partner Glenys Molyneux.

The jury heard that Robinson and his father had a history of disputes. On May 16, 2013, the day of the murder, neighbours heard arguing, sounds of a struggle and Mr Spiller asking his son to call him an ambulance.

Ms Molyneux welcomed the life sentence, with a minimum term of 30 years.

"The past 18 months have been extremely traumatic for myself and my family, from first receiving the dreadful news of Will's death until the trial which revealed the full horror of what happened that day," she said.

"Will was a loving, caring man. No sentence can bring him back but we are satisfied that the verdict of guilty was the appropriate one for this heinous crime.

Detective Chief Inspector John Gately from Dorset Police described it as 'a particularly gruesome murder', adding: "My thoughts go out to Mr Spiller's family and friends. I would like to pay tribute to the investigation team and the forensic team who had to deal with a horrific crime scene."

Robinson had denied murder but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. However, prosecutors proceeded to trial and jurors unanimously found him guilty of murder.



Nathan Robinson killed his father and went partying

As a family we would like to thank people for their love and support during this dreadful time. We would also like to thank Dorset Police and the Crown Prosecution Service who worked so hard to bring this case to court and achieve justice for Will."

Hall and park car fees are increased

PARKING charges will go up at Himley Hall and Park in the new year, as part of plans to boost council coffers.

Dudley Council says increased charges for parking at the popular estate, which attracts thousands of visitors every year, will come into force from January.

Bosses defended the new pay and display fees as being 'competitive'.

Longer

The cost of parking for two hours will increase by 50 pence, from £1.10 to £1.60.

People wanting to park for longer, will now have to pay a fee of £1.70, up from £1.60.

It comes as the council looks to make at least £27million of savings over the next three years.

Cabinet member for culture, Councillor Hilary Bills, described it as a 'marginal' increase.

She explained: "As part of the fees review for this year the parking for visitors to Himley Park have gone up marginally to £1.20 for two hours parking which — when considered against other neighbouring country parks — remains extremely competitive."

Firecrew cut woman free

AN ELDERLY woman was cut free from a car by firefighters after being involved in a crash involving a parked car in Sedgley.

The car was on its roof when emergency crews arrived at the junction of The Vista and Wolverhampton Road.

The female passenger was freed by firefighters from Dudley at around 6pm on December 12.

She was treated by paramedics at the scene with the male driver. Both were not believed to be seriously injured but taken to hospital as a precaution.

Tunnel visitors

AN open day at the Drakelow Tunnels, near Kinver, attracted people from across the country to visit the Cold War bunkers. Around 100 attended the event, cash going towards the tunnel museum plans and £200 to the Guide Dogs charity.

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Petition growing against pub plan

MORE than 400 people have signed a petition against plans to build a convenience store on the car park of a popular Cradley Heath pub.

A Friends group has now also been set up by campaigners who are concerned by the proposals for the Haden Cross in Halesowen.

The store would be run by The Co-Operative and create up to 20 jobs.

A planning application for the development has been lodged with Sandwell Council.

A petition has already attracted 420 names and the friends group is working to get the pub recognised as an 'asset of community value'.

Objectors are worried about the impact the store will have on the pub and the reduced amount of parking.

Chairman of the Friends of Haden Cross Inn group Tim Haskey said: "It is a thriving, traditional pub and we don't want to lose it. We are worried this application will kill the pub."

Martin Hughes, spokesman for New River Retail, which owns the Haden Cross, said the proposals had been designed to help safeguard the future of the pub and similar schemes had worked well elsewhere.

King Street now two-way

A MAIN route through Dudley town centre has reopened to two-way traffic for the first time in 15 years.

The change in priorities in King Street, which took place just before Christmas, was aimed at boosting trade and has been welcomed by shopkeepers. Only buses and taxis had been able to use the route. Motorists wanting to drive from one side of King Street to the other were diverted around Flood Street car parks to the rear of King Street. But now all traffic can use the route and eight extra parking spaces have been provided.

£8k cycle lane

A CYCLE lane could be created along a busy Sandwell route to help boost safety, under new plans.

The work along Bromford Lane Island in Oldbury would cost £8,000. An existing footpath would be converted into a joint pedestrian and cycle route.

Move to end traffic congestion by Christmas

COMMUNITY leaders in Hagley say the end of roadworks at a busy junction will be a 'blessed relief' after almost four months of traffic chaos.

Motorists have been facing daily delays at the A456 Kidderminster Road roundabout since a £1 million scheme started by Cala Homes to revamp the junction.

The work began in the summer and was expected to be completed by Christmas Eve. It will see a signalling system and crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists installed

at the busy roundabout. It is being done by Cala Homes as part of its Wychbury Fields development for 175 homes, located near the roundabout.

The developer wrote to 3,500 residents informing them of the possible disruption ahead of the 26-week scheduled work.

Sympathy

Hagley Parish Council chairman Councillor Steve Colella said: "My sympathy goes to the people living around the traffic island

and the people who have to pass through it everyday. It really is an absolute nightmare. "I understand the work is almost finished. It will be a blessed relief for people when it is finally cleared up."

As well as traffic congestion, Councillor Colella said people living near the site were having to deal with other issues related to the work. He said: "I've heard of people having pavements near their homes damaged by the heavy vehicles and people being kept up by night-time working."

"There is also the problem of people using nearby roads such as Western Road and Newfield Road to avoid the junction."

Cala Homes said the first phase of homes at the development had 'flown out the door' since its launch this year.

The development includes two, three, four and five bedroom homes.

Robert Monkman, sales and marketing director, said: "This is a flagship development for Cala so we're delighted with the success of phase one."

Visitor proposals revived for the future of abbey

PROPOSALS to build a visitor centre and six houses next to Halesowen Abbey, first agreed four years ago, have been revived.

The scheme, first approved in 2010 by Dudley Council, has been extended for another three years.

The abbey went up for sale last year shortly before its owner, Chris Tudor, died at the age of 60 from cancer.

Plans were put forward by prospective buyers to turn the abbey into a wedding venue but the family of Mr Tudor objected and took the building off the market.

Mr Tudor's son, Stephen, said the family now plans to move forward with the original proposals for the visitor centre and houses.

He explained: "The plans were originally put forward in 2010 by my father and they are exactly the same as they were then. The work was supposed to start last year but we were forced to put them on hold when my father passed away."

Mr Tudor said the work should now go ahead next year but nothing was yet set in stone.

"My father worked long and hard to get the plans approved so we are going ahead with them as they are," he said.

"They include six houses and a visitor centre with a workshop."

"I actually plan to take on one of the houses and some other members of the family will move into the others — it is a bit of a family affair."

The abbey and surrounding barns have been in the

By Charlie Benton

Tudor family for around 20 years.

Mr Tudor said: "The abbey is in need of work as right now it is just a wall and there is not much to see, which can disappoint visitors."

"The visitor centre will allow for a workshop where people can really learn about the history of the abbey itself."

"It will be kept the same as when the original monks first built it. We will have experts from National Heritage on hand to ensure nothing is disturbed. I think it will be a great thing for Halesowen."

The approval for the plans will remain as long as building starts within three years.

Similar proposals were put forward in 2002 to turn the barns into offices and homes, sparking outrage from historians who feared the building work would have an impact on runs beneath the barns.



Halesowen actress Sinead Long in Birmingham city centre with the Jersey Boys

Oh what a role as Sinead is home

HIT musical Jersey Boys has arrived in Birmingham – and a girl from Halesowen is among those taking centre stage.

Sinead Long, 23, is appearing in the show about 1960s and 70s American pop stars The Four Seasons, which is now on at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre until January 4.

West End star Tim Driesen is heading the cast as Frankie Valli, while Sam Ferriday, who plays Bob Gaudio, is from Telford and stars alongside Lewis Griffiths as Nick Massi, Stephen Webb as Tommy DeVito, while Matt Corner plays Frankie Valli at certain performances.

Miss Long grew up in Halesowen and attended Our Lady and St Kenelm Primary School in Halesowen and Hagley High School before completing her A-levels at King Edward VI School in Stourbridge.

She trained as a dancer from around the age of two to 18 at Timmins Academy in Halesowen and appeared at various festivals and competitions in and around the West Midlands. At 16 she even took part in the New Alexandra Theatre Stage Experience scheme with a role in West Side Story.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Warley MP call for sight loss support

AN MP is backing a campaign to ensure that everyone diagnosed with sight loss gets emotional support to come to terms with their condition.

John Spellar, MP for Warley, is supporting RNIB, which is calling for every eye department in the UK to have access to a qualified sight loss adviser so that people are properly supported as they adapt to sight problems. Adults in the UK are more afraid of losing their sight than developing Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, heart disease or having to use a wheelchair.

Threat was not 'terror' related

A MAN arrested following threats to West Midlands Police which sparked a security alert has been eliminated from inquiries.

Police have now said the threat is not terrorism related and ruled out an attempt to kidnap an officer.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Officers continue to investigate the circumstances behind the call to West Midlands Police but our assessment is that it was not terrorist related, nor is there any credible threat of a kidnap."

Dog chipping free thanks to lottery

A DOG welfare charity is offering free microchipping to dogs in the West Midlands after receiving an award from the People's Postcode Lottery.

The Dog's Trust is offering the chipping after research showed 160,000 dogs across the region remained unchipped.

For more information about the Dogs Trust's free chipping events, visit www.chipmydog.org.uk website.

Universal Credit is coming to borough

BENEFITS claimants in the Black Country will be among the first to start receiving Universal Credit as it starts a nationwide roll out in 2015. The Government is bringing in the single benefit, which replaces the six main benefits and tax credits. Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge and Birmingham will be among the first wave.

Christmas beer

THE Green Duck Beer Company in Stourbridge is holding a four-day beer festival over the festive period at the Badelynge Bar in Rufford Road from December 26 to 29, 1pm to 11pm each day.

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OWING to a door being accidentally left open I spent the night sharing a bed with the cat and was reminded of a crucial difference between dogs and cats. A dog will never sit on your head.

BAH, humbug and off to the big store. It is the duty of every male at this time of year to be dragged up and down tinsel-decked aisles while looking at pointless objects. Consider the following: A window vacuum. A gluten-free sausage-making kit. A small book entitled A Guinea Pig Nativity. You can measure the state of society's development by counting the number of objects we can manage perfectly well without.

THE Daily Telegraph leader column, no less, assures us this week that Kate and William's little boy "will be George VII one fine day." Not if his grandfather beats him to it, he won't. There is still speculation that Prince Charles, on taking the throne, will style himself King George VII. Let us hope we have to wait a very long time to find out.

IS there anything sillier than the claim by UKIP leader Nigel Farage that he was late for a party in Wales as a result of immigration causing traffic jams? Yes, there is. It is the monstrous, head-in-the-sand delusion among so many politicians that the population of the UK can rise from 50 million to 70 million in a single lifetime and cause no problems at all. Voters are tempted by Farage only because they are governed by ostriches.

AFTER a couple of near misses between drones and airliners, the world seems to be waking up to the fact that you can buy drones and fly them anywhere you wish, including into the air intake of a Jumbo jet's engine. Drones are, in effect, camera-guided anti-aircraft weapons available on eBay for a few hundred quid. How did that happen?

I GET a regular stream of mail from a small but noisy group of old codgers complaining about how hard-up pensioners are these days. The suggestion is that there was once a golden age when pensioners had enough money. Remind me. When was that?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

EDL supporters jailed over violence at rally

TWO English Defence League supporters from Dudley borough involved in violent clashes with police at a protest rally have been jailed.

Lee Joshua, of Netherton, clashed with police while on crutches during the disorder in Birmingham city centre last year.

He claimed to have 'enjoyed every minute' of violent scenes which left 30 police officers injured. He later posted an image of himself burning a copy of the Koran on Facebook. He was jailed for 16 months.

Jake Hill, of Mill Street, Brierley Hill, was jailed for 22 months for his part in the disorder. Hill was told by the judge that his involvement in the disorder had been persistent and prolonged.

Flag

Around 200 EDL supporters were involved in the violence in the Broad Street and Centenary Square areas in July 2013, which lasted for around two hours.

Birmingham Crown Court heard a Muslim prayer cap and a Pakistani flag were set on fire in the street, while police were pelted with paving slabs and bottles during the disorder.

Joshua, aged 43, of Highbridge Road, who told police he had consumed ten cans of lager, was said to have been

at the front of attempts to break through police lines.

Judge Richard Bond was told that Joshua had previously served eight custodial sentences after amassing a total of 89 previous convictions.

The court heard that Hill, 22, attempted to push a policeman, spat in the direction of another and was part of a crowd which attacked four officers trapped between two vans.

Hill was told by the judge that his involvement in the disorder had been persistent and prolonged.

Passing sentence on the men, who admitted violent disorder, Judge Bond said much conduct at the rally had been 'plainly racist and/or anti-Muslim'.

A further 48 men were due to be sentenced for offences linked to the disorder.

Busker's bid for stardom



Student Bradleigh Aston busking in Dudley town centre

A MUSICIAN who busks for coins on the streets of Dudley is hoping to win a recording deal.

Eighteen-year-old singer-songwriter Bradleigh Aston, from Lower Gornal, found himself in the running for the Brand New Artist 2015 Awards after entering the competition last month.

He said: "I can't believe I made it this far."

College

"I am checking the updated rankings every Friday when they put them up to see whether I have gone up or down. I am asking family and friends to vote for me as well as at gigs and at college, everybody is being really supportive."

Halesowen College student Bradleigh made it onto long lists of performers throughout the country and eventually onto a shortlist of 25 in the contest run by record label Negart.

The prize for winning included £5,000 cash and a recording contract, with voting closing before Christmas. Bradleigh was waiting to hear how he had done.

Daylight rapist gets eight year sentence

A MAN who raped a woman in broad daylight in a Rowley Regis street before being chased off by members of the public has been jailed for eight years.

Unemployed Gerald Malcolm, aged 48, met his victim in a library before they went to a pub.

The Jamaican national invited her back to his house for another drink but, when the 28-year-old fell ill, he started walking her home.

Fled

Members of the public spotted Malcolm having sex with his victim on a grass verge, and one man tried to throw a bowl of water over him.

Malcolm, now of no fixed address, fled but the victim could not get up after the attack on Hanover Street.

Police found the woman was more than three times the drink-driving limit, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Malcolm admitted rape, which happened at around 4pm on April 2, and now faces deportation.

His victim said: "The assault has had a lasting effect on me."

"I don't know how I got so drunk. I keep thinking that this is my own fault because I was so drunk, but he shouldn't have done this to me, he shouldn't have taken advantage of me."

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Teens can vote for favourite new book

YOUNG bookworms are being urged to nominate their favourite book for an annual competition.

Libraries in Dudley are running the Teenage Book Award 2014 and have selected the finalists with the help of readers.

Titles in the running are *Dragon Shield* by Charlie Fletcher, *Half Bad* by Sally Green, *Taken* by David Massey, *A Soldier's Friend* by Megan Rix, *Dandelion Clocks* by Rebecca Westcott and *A Boy Called Hope* by Lara Williamson.

Teenagers have until March 13 to pick their favourite.

Encourage

The award is designed to encourage young people to read more.

Libraries boss Councillor Hilary Bills said: "A big thank you to the young people who have been involved so far in helping to select the top six books in the running. All of the nominated books can be borrowed from any borough library for free so I would encourage as many young people as possible to get borrowing, reading and nominating."

To vote visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/libraries-archives/libraries/children-and-young-people/teen-book-award/voting and the winner will be announced in March.

Primaries do well but the senior schools can do better

PRIMARY schools in Dudley climbed to joint 88th place with neighbours Sandwell in the national Key Stage 2 tables, continuing last year's improvement.

A total of 78 per cent of pupils at schools in the borough gained Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths. The results means Dudley primary schools have moved 16 places up the table.

Top performer was Blanford Mere Primary School in Kingswinford, where all 36 pupils eligible to take tests managed to gain at least Level 4 in reading, writing and maths.

Pedmore CE Primary School in Stourbridge was second of Dudley's primary schools, with 97 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 in the key subjects. In third place was Ham Dingle Primary in Stourbridge, where 96 per cent of pupils managed the benchmark level of achievement.

The performance of primary schools across Dudley improved more than anywhere in the West Midlands over the last 12 months. Meanwhile, the performance of secondary schools in Dudley has remained the same as last year.

Dudley's Councillor Tim Crumpton, responsible for children's services, said: "This is really good news for schools, teachers, parents and children in the Dudley borough as we have seen

By Pete Madeley

improvements here which are bigger than most places across the country.

"We will continue to work hard with our schools to make even more improvements to ensure the primary provision continues to excel and we will work to build on the standards in our secondary schools where more than half of students are already attending good or outstanding schools."

Sandwell improved its position with 78 per cent of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving benchmark grades.

Best performing was St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary in Oldbury, where all eligible pupils achieved the benchmark in the three key disciplines. Timbertree Academy in Cradley Heath grabbed second spot, a massive leap of 42 places from last year, with St Hubert's Catholic Primary in Oldbury climbing to third spot.

School choir hit high note with carols



Pupils from St Margaret's Primary School in fine voice to win best choir at Merry Hill

MUSICAL youngsters from a primary school in Halesowen are singing with success after winning the award for best choir at Merry Hill shopping centre's annual carol singing contest.

St Margaret's Primary School in Hasbury scooped the accolade at the centre's Little Voices event. More than 20 schools took part in the contest, which was spread over five days.

Music coordinator, Pam Griffiths, said: "We have competed in the contest for the last few years and we were delighted to be invited back this year. We managed to get into the final a few years ago but this is the first time we have ever won."

"It was really special for us because this is the biggest choir we have ever taken to compete."

The choir, made up of 50 pupils aged from seven to 11, competed against seven other schools in the final.

They sang a number of Christmas carols, including *No War Will Stop Us Singing*. As well as walking away with the award for Best Choir, the school on Hagley Road also won £1,000.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Advice on how to avoid festive feud

CHRISTMAS really is a time to be with the family, according to a survey of people in the Black Country, and most are prepared to bite their tongue to avoid a row.

Some 88 per cent of people said 'family' when asked by Oldbury branch of the Relate charity what was most important to them at Christmas. Eight out of 10 of those asked said they would strive to ensure the festive period passed without a falling out. The relationship charity said thinking before speaking and airing views prior to the get-together could be key to a harmonious festive period. The most common worry was the bank balance, while 15 per cent feared spending Christmas alone.

Park call for help from volunteers

VOLUNTEERS are being recruited ahead of a £3.1 million revamp of a park.

Senior heritage ranger Deborah Merrick is looking for people to help out at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge.

One of the projects being set up in a wildlife monitoring scheme to discover species living in the park.

An events programme for the next six months has also been drawn up. The scheme includes restoration of the listed gates, railings, bandstand and pool plus creation of a cafe in the tea gardens. Email the ranger at deborah.merrick@dudley.gov.uk

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

ONE thing that maybe should have been on your Christmas list – a pillowcase using technology borrowed from Nasa?

Now maybe you were under the misconception that pillow cases were pretty much one and the same. Ok, some might be polyester, some cotton – maybe silk if you're from Tettenhall – but by and large, there isn't that much technology that goes into them.

Well, our good friends in the old US of A are really pushing the envelope (I think that's what they say across the pond) with their latest development in pillowcase technology.

Completely demolishing the myth that space exploration is an expensive luxury, somebody has used the findings of extra-terrestrial research to come up with a range of pillowcases that look and smell like bacon. Why did nobody come up with this sooner?

"Our bacon-scented pillowcases use state-of-the-art printing technology we stole from Nasa to allow the scent of bacon to permeate your dreams and expand your mind," says the press release.

"That's right, the scent of bacon is embedded in the ink on these specially printed pillowcases," adds the wonderfully understated missive.

If cared for according to the included instructions, the smell will last for six-to-12 months, and can endure multiple wash cycles.

Not only that, sleeping on a machine-washable bacon buttie can also enrich the mind, giving us better dreams and a dramatic rise in intelligence levels according to some of the more bizarre claims.

It also promises easier morning wake-ups and effortless weight loss.

Unless, of course, you eat your pillowcase.

□□□□□

MEMO to local authorities, and other taxpayer-funded bodies. Replacing words with numerals, such as Pathway 2 Change or Plan 4 Life does not make you look trendy, relevant or cool.

It does make you look semi-literate and stupid, though. And is it any wonder that some youngsters leave school barely able to construct a sentence in basic English when the authorities which are supposed to be educating them appear unable to tell the difference between numbers and letters?

□□□□□

MEANWHILE, the British Army will send hundreds of troops over to Iraq in the New Year, to 'pass on the lessons learned in Afghanistan'.

Lessons learned in Afghanistan? The words 'horse', 'bolted' and 'stable door' spring to mind. Perhaps if a previous prime minister had learned the lessons from the past, we would never have sent any troops to Afghanistan in the first place.



MP Gavin Williamson's choice



West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey's card



Walsall South MP Valerie Vaz's card



Dudley North MP Ian Austin's card choice



Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem leaders' cards



Walsall MP David Winnick's choice

House of cards for political Christmas

Differing politician festive card designs show a wide variety of styles as we head towards election year

FROM the Houses of Parliament in the snow to the drawings of schoolchildren, MPs always try to find their own way of saying Merry Christmas.

While party leaders such as David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg put themselves on the front of their cards, backbenchers and shadow ministers like to reflect the people they represent.

Some go as far as to organise competitions months in advance among youngsters as they seek the right design.

West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey was so keen to get started he launched his competition in June, while temperatures were in the low 20s.

The MP wanted to give every primary school in his constituency the opportunity to get involved.

Nine eventually took him up on the offer and had their youngsters submit their designs. The winning entry was by 10-year-old Mohammed Rezwan Shuvo of Sacred Heart Primary School in Tipton, who painted his school in the snow.

His picture will now feature on the front of Mr Bailey's constituency Christmas cards of which more than 1,000 are being sent to constituents, businesses, places of worship and schools.

Mr Bailey said: "Mohammed's entry was fantastic as were all the entries and it was very difficult to choose a winner."

All the pictures are being displayed in Tipton Library where the majority of the schools took part in the competition.

Another MP who chose a youngster to create his card's image was South Staffordshire's Gavin Williamson.

As Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, he will be sure



The card chosen by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris

to send a card to David Cameron. That means Caitlin Oakley, who is in year nine at Wombourne's Ounsdale Primary School, will have her picture of a snowman and snow woman in front of the village maypole on display in 10 Downing Street.

A Christmas card designed by Ellie Durnall of Milking Bank Primary School in Dudley will be finding its way through the letterboxes of hundreds of people, including the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House of Commons, after the youngster won Dudley North MP Ian Austin's Parliamentary Christmas card competition.

Mr Austin was due to present Ellie Durnall with her prize during a carol service at the school after receiving nearly 500 entries, following his invitation to schools. The winning design shows Santa Claus flying over Dudley Castle surrounded by animals.

Jolie-Mai Powell from Cotwall End Primary, Charis Martin from Foxyards Primary School, Ben Jackson from Priory Primary School and Sally Ben-

nett from Straits Primary School were runners up. The cards have been professionally printed in full colour and include the name and school of the winner and three runners up. Prizes include family tickets to Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum.

Mr Austin said: "Yet again, the standard of this year's entrants has been really high. I loved Ellie's picture of a snow-covered Dudley castle and zoo, which was brilliantly drawn and really showed off our heritage."

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, and Margot James, who represents Stourbridge, also got young people to design their cards. Miss James worked with Stourbridge College Art and Design Centre in Brierley Hill. The winner was Aaron-Ryan Samra, studying a one year diploma in foundation studies art and design.

Other MPs go for something that shows where they work. Valerie Vaz, who represents Walsall South, went for an image of a ceiling boss depicting St Catherine from the Chapel of St



Stourbridge MP Margot James's card

Mary Undercroft at the Palace of Westminster. David Winnick, MP for Walsall North, chose one of the Elizabeth Tower, which houses Big Ben.

Official

David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg opted for starkly different styles for their final official festive cards before the General Election battle.

The Prime Minister has a statesman-like photograph outside 10 Downing Street. A besuited Tory leader is shown standing alongside wife Samantha, flanked by Chelsea Pensioners.

Mr Miliband, meanwhile, opted for a more personal touch. The Labour leader sits at a table at his London home with wife Justine and their sons, five-year-old Daniel and Samuel, four.

Liberal Democrat leader Mr Clegg and wife Miriam have joined the trend for "photobooting". The couple are shown in a series of passport-style shots, with the Deputy Prime Minister donning a Santa hat before holding up a sign saying "Merry Christmas!"

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

DAVID Winnick knows a thing or two about liberty and freedom, so it was a surprise to hear him raise the prospect of fining people who don't turn out to vote.

The long-serving MP for Walsall North was responsible for Tony Blair's first Commons defeat on a whipped vote when, in 2005, he rebelled over Labour's planned 90-day detention 28 days without trial of terror suspects.

He put forward an amendment limiting it to 28 days and won. In a week when the CIA has been shamed for its use of torture and we were reminded that a British citizen is still in Guantanamo Bay 12 years after being detained, without a conviction, Mr Winnick must have been fully aware of the context of his proposal.

For while he is adamant that it is a democratic right to vote, what he wants the Commons to discuss in a 10-minute Rule Bill in January is the democratic right not to vote.

He proposes that it be made a civic obligation to vote, or at the very least make clear one's intention to abstain. Effectively then, being apathetic about politics would attract a fine.

Mr Winnick suggests something like the Australian system, where voting has been compulsory since the 1920s and turnout has been consistently above 90 per cent.

In Britain in 2010 it was 65 per cent. That was a slight improvement on 2005 but it meant one in three people did not bother to put anything on a ballot paper.

Even if they had scrawled 'none of the above' on their paper and spoiled it, that would still have counted as turning out.

In the elections for the West Midlands police and crime commissioner it was even more dire. Barely one in 10 registered a preference.

The Government had offered democratic accountability for people overseeing the police force and the electorate either did not understand what it was they were being offered or did not care.

Mr Winnick's worry is that, left unchecked, there will come a time when a government is elected and fewer than half the people had their say on it.

Anyone who cares about the democratic process would share that concern.

What Mr Winnick and his fellow MPs must address in their debate, however, is why it has come to this.

The argument that the parties are all the same no longer applies now that New Labour is over. There is an enormous difference between Labour and the Tories in terms of policy.

Yet among the leaders – Oxford graduates, career politicians etc – there isn't a fat lot. And it is also pretty rare in General Elections to see just those two parties on the ballot paper. People have plenty of choice. They just aren't using it.

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Pickpocket is jailed for theft at market

A PICKPOCKET caught by undercover police at Birmingham's Frankfurt German Market has been jailed for 14 weeks.

Romanian thief Lulia Raducanu was caught red-handed when she delved into a woman's bag while queuing at a bar in Victoria Square. She and her accomplice were spotted by plain-clothed officers unzipping the woman's shoulder bag.

Raducanu, aged 23, of Webster Street, Coventry, was put behind bars for 14 weeks at Birmingham Magistrates Court. She pleaded guilty to theft while her accomplice also admitted the offence and will be sentenced.

Officers have been mingling with Christmas shoppers in the busy market in the city centre in a bid to catch pickpockets.

Pc Rebecca Dodds said of the Romanian duo: "We spotted this pair acting shifty and watched as one moved up behind a woman, unzipped her shoulder bag and put her hand inside."

"The German Market is a hugely popular attraction, last year bringing in five million people and unfortunately that also attracts opportunistic thieves. We have uniform officers patrolling to deter pickpockets, plus undercover colleagues looking to catch people in the act."

Officers are deployed at peak times at New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill stations, and on bus routes.

Car and horse trader jailed for claiming £30k too much

A FATHER-OF-TWO wrongly claimed more than £30,000 in benefits after failing to disclose that he had earned more than £90,000 trading in horses and cars, a court heard.

Craig Richards, aged 40, began claiming carers allowance in 2003 on the basis that he was living with his partner, but caring for his mother, who suffers from dementia. In 2008 he also started receiving income support on the basis the only income he was receiving was the carers allowance.

However, Laura Hobson, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Richards, who pleaded guilty to failing to disclose income, was also receiving money from buying and selling dogs and cars, which he regarded as a hobby and therefore believed he did not have to declare.

Breach

Miss Hobson, prosecuting, said Richards, of Harold Road, Rowley Regis, claimed more than £20,000 too much in carers allowance and £10,000 too much income support. He was also in breach of a suspended sentence given to him in January 2012 for perverting the course of justice.

Samantha Powis, mitigating, said the defendant was going through a difficult time in having to look after his two children, as well as his elderly parents.

She added: "He has always had £90,000 under a mattress and it is for a

By Simon Stone

hobby and he didn't declare it because he never thought about it and he has indicated to the probation officer that he wishes he had thought about it."

She urged Judge Peter Barrie to consider the likely impact on his children and parents if he was jailed and to give Richards a suspended sentence instead.

Jailing Richards for 24 weeks, the judge told him: "The court sees many cases of this kind when people have made wrongful applications for benefit when they are in desperate situations and can make a strong case that there was at least a moral argument for having the benefits to meet their needs."

"You don't fall into that category as you were making large amounts from your activities in business and I can not properly deal with you in any other way than impose a prison sentence for this sustained and substantial fraud."

It's the real thing for Mike and Amie



Sealed with a kiss — Amie Killworth accepts the marriage proposal from Mike Seggis, of Rowley Regis

THE iconic Coca-Cola lorry arrived in Birmingham and brought with it a bit of festive magic for one romantic couple.

Mike Seggis, of Rowley Regis, took the opportunity to get down on one knee and propose to Amie Killworth using the truck as a back-drop when it appeared in time for their special moment at the Bullring.

Coca-Cola helped Mike pull off his romantic Christmas proposal with a special 'marry me' sign which was revealed at the exact moment Mike and

Amie had their picture taken in front of the truck, which has signalled the arrival of Christmas for many since 1995.

A choir helped out with a special rendition of Mariah Carey's All I Want for Christmas Is You.

Special

Much to the relief of both Mike and everybody watching, Amie said yes.

Amie said: "Mike proposing has made this year truly special — it is the best Christmas present I've ever had."

"I had no idea he had been planning the proposal for so long. Every time I see the advert now I'll remember this special moment."

Mike said he had been planning the proposal for a few months and has secretly recruited the help of both families.

The Coca-Cola Christmas truck has been travelling across the UK since November as part of its nationwide tour. It will visit 46 cities and towns with the famous lorry.

NEWS IN BRIEF

On cue for pews with church move

PLANS to turn a former snooker hall into a church have been given the go-ahead. The Birmingham Pentecostal Fellowship will move in to The Golden Cue, in Station Road, Rowley Regis, over the next six months.

The organisation, which has almost 100 members, currently hires a church hall in Solihull on Sundays. Leader Reverend Wesley Lukose said: "We're delighted, we'd been hoping for approval for many weeks, and now it's come."

The fellowship describes itself as a family-focused organisation affiliated to Assemblies of God. It plans to hold services at the church on Saturdays and Sundays. The church group will now buy the site for £230,000.

Shopping centre work set to start

WORK will start next month on the transformation of a well-known shopping centre in the middle of Birmingham.

Paradise Circus, near the second city's new central library, will be transformed with a £500 million investment, beginning on January 5.

The announcement about work starting on the 17 acre site came yesterday from the joint venture company, Paradise Circus Limited Partnership, a partnership between Birmingham City Council and BT Pension Scheme.

The scheme will be managed by Hermes Real Estate, one of the UK's biggest property companies, with Argent as the development manager.



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Double trouble — Cinderella's Ugly Sisters Ben Stock and Tony Jackson



The Prince's aide-de-camp Dandini Grande Salami (Julian Clary) in one of his lavish costumes



X-tra special — it's singer Niki Evans as a Brummie Fairy Godmother



'I look like a letter box' — Buttons (Joe Tracini) as Cinderella's coachman at the Prince's grand ball

Having a ball at Grand with Cinderella and co

DANDINI dares to be naughty but not too outrageous when Julian Clary stars in the most flamboyant panto to grace the Grand's stage for years.

A couple of performances in, there were a few brief flat moments and the odd 'start the car' comments from the cast as the performers sussed out exactly how to hit a Wulfrunian audience's funnybone.

As aide-de-camp to the handsome prince, the more handsome and infinitely more regal Clary, was in command with his sharp-tongue shredding anyone upon whom his gaze would fall: "Dorothy Perkins must be picked clean" or "I suppose it beats a night in eating lard" among the barbed quips.

Clary talks rather than sings his songs, including That's Amore and Search For The Hero, where he can get maximum comic effect just from where he places the emphasis in a lyric. Thankfully, most of his innuendo was pitched well above the heads of the younger audience members. But

PANTO REVIEW

By Leon Burakowski

when it comes to glamour, not even Cinderella's ball gown could outshine his succession of spectacular outfits.

Alice Baker was a charming Cinderella who surely didn't need the aid of a Fairy Godmother to capture the heart of Will Richardson's nice-but-dim Prince Charming, a dead ringer for Mattel's Ken doll.

Cheeky

Pint-sized Joe Tracini was a chirpy and cheeky as Buttons with body-popping, rapping and magic tricks alongside the slapstick buffoonery. But the biggest surprise was when he sang All Of Me. The Hollyoaks actor's poignant version, after being rejected by Cinders, got the biggest cheer of the night.

Niki Evans as the buxom Brummie Fairy Godmother was always on the spot vocally, even when precariously perched on a silver moon dangling 20

feet above the stage — she's still got plenty of X Factor. She was joined aloft by a spectacular flying horse and coach carrying Cinderella, the wow moment that closes the first act.

The Ugly Sisters, Ben Stock and Tony Jackson, are plenty hissable for their cruelty to Cinders but funny too in their crazy costumes.

Add fine support from panto veterans Iain Stuart Robertson (Baron Hardup) and Ian Gledhill (Lord Chamberlain), energetic dancers including youngsters from Willenhall's Classic Academy of Dance, a host of pop songs (including Born This Way and Happy) and you have all the right ingredients.

The festive confection is complete with local jibes — Wolves came in for stick even with Steve Bull in the house — and adorable tots persuaded to give their rendition of Old MacDonald Had A Farm in a heart-warming finale.

It's not just Cinders who will be having a ball when this all-singing, all-dancing, and in the case of its glamorous comedy star, all-mincing, production really hits its stride.



Alice Baker is a charming Cinderella in Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's pantomime, running until January 18

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Even Santa can't have sneak preview of zoo attraction

THE £250,000 Castle Creatures attraction at Dudley Zoo is being kept under wraps this Christmas — even with Santa Claus as a neighbour.

Work is well under way on the new interactive medieval experience within Dudley Castle, which will explain its history and house animal exhibits to show how people lived in close proximity to rats and bats in everyday life.

But when Santa moved in to his Winter Wonderland Castle Grotto, where he will be greeting children until Christmas Eve, the new features were covered up so as not to spoil the surprise.

Dudley Zoo media and communications officer Rachel Hickman said: "We're all excited about the new experience, which is taking shape and looking fantastic within the castle.

"Because we don't want to spoil

the surprise for anybody until the big reveal at Easter next year, we've temporarily wrapped up the huge board game flooring and all the interactive interior displays — and not even Santa was allowed to have a peek when he arrived to oversee final preparations to his grotto."

Work on the six-month construction project, supported by cash from the European Regional Development Fund, started in September.

The new attraction will set the zoo in its historic location, telling the story from the castle's origins in 1070 through to the present day, focusing on how people in medieval times lived. Features will include a grill where visitors can inhale authentic smells of the old days. The lay-out includes a unique interactive screen whereby visitors can create their own animals from a gene pool.



Even Santa will have to wait until Easter to see Dudley Zoo's upcoming Castle Creatures exhibition

City to axe jobs and cut hours at library

BIRMINGHAM City Council has announced plans to axe more than 1,000 council jobs and reduce opening hours at its iconic new £189 million library.

The job losses will hit the Library of Birmingham, which opened in September last year, where around 100 posts are expected to go as part of plans to reduce council spending.

Unveiling the Labour-run authority's consultation on its 2015 budget, council leader Sir Albert Bore said the authority needed to make annual savings of £117 million next year.

Under the plans, announced by Sir Albert at the city's Council House, the Library of Birmingham would see its weekly opening hours slashed from 73 to 40 in April next year. Approximately 100 of the library's 188 staff would also lose their jobs.

Business, learning, music and archive services will also cease, other than counter transactions, if external funding cannot be identified.

The Library of Birmingham was shortlisted for this year's Riba Stirling Prize.

Time limit at car park to deter rail commuters

A THREE-HOUR parking limit is being introduced at a public gardens to stop commuters leaving their cars there all day.

The car park off Sydney Road in Cradley Heath is intended for users of Mary Macarthur Gardens.

According to local councillors, it is currently being used as a long-stay car park by commuters using the nearby rail station who are trying to avoid paying.

Now Sandwell Council is introducing a three-hour limit at the park, with no return within two hours, to ensure spaces are available for those using the park.

Labour's John Tipper, one of three councillors who represent Cradley Heath and Old Hill, said: "The real problem is that commuters who are using Cradley Heath rail station have been parking all around the immediate area.

Clogged

"This had been mainly on the New Pool estate but we have put markings there earlier in the year. That seems to have dispersed cars further away from the station but the problems have continued.

"The majority of the time the car park at Mary Macarthur Gardens is occupied by people who use the rail station, as are the adjacent narrow streets which become clogged with commuters."

Sandwell Council received just one objection to the proposals, having advertised the changes, which said the rail station had become increasingly popular and parking there was no longer sufficient. They added that

By Rob Cox

the Gardens' car park was never full and time restrictions would instead result in cars parking in front of homes on Sydney Road.

In September work began on a £1.9 million overhaul of Cradley Heath bus station, being paid for through the Better Bus Area Fund, which is a £10 million pot to improve public transport in Dudley. The possibility of upgrading the rail station car park had been discussed as part of the plans.

Councillor Tipper said: "It is one thing we raised with Centro when they were preparing to redevelop the bus station. For whatever reason they didn't think to take up the suggestion."

The council has estimated the cost of implementing the changes at around £1,700, but Councillor Tipper said it was the logical step to ensure the car park remains available to park users.

He added: "There is a lot of concern in particular about parking on the side of the road. In an emergency it would be hard to get an ambulance down some of these roads."

Housing proposed at former factory site

A PATCH of wasteland in the Black Country could be transformed into a housing estate of 46 homes, if proposals are accepted by Sandwell planners.

The homes are planned for the former NJ Bradford and Sons Glassworks factory site off Ashes Road in Oldbury. The proposal was put forward by Worcestershire-based housing company Lioncourt Homes Ltd with the plans being drawn up by architects Cadsquare Midlands.

Councillor Yvonne Davies, ward councillor and a cabinet member, said she welcomes the plans but does not believe it will solve the housing problems in the area.

Councillor Davies said: "There is a severe shortage of housing across the board, and there does need to be a push on buildings of all shapes and sizes. However, these will be two, three and four-bedroom homes which will not be suitable for vulnerable people who will not be able to live there unassisted."

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HALESOWEN, Newton Court£800 pcm - Fees
A recently converted 3 bedroom ground floor apartment finished to an extremely high standard and centrally located with commuter links to Halesowen and Birmingham. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, both with fitted wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, 1 single bedroom, 2 extra rooms downstairs, secondary glazing throughout. Allocated parking. Viewings recommended. EPC: C



BRIERLEY HILL, Gayfield Avenue£795 pcm - Fees
Superb modern & totally refurbished 4 bedroom detached house on this very popular estate. (Withymoor Village) Featuring an entrance hall leading to study room, downstairs w.c, large lounge with separate dining room, fitted kitchen with 'Country Chef' range cooker, 3 double bedrooms & 1 single, family bathroom with shower, garage & driveway. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Longmoor Road£795 pcm - Fees
Large 3 bed mucklow style semi-detached property features 2 reception rooms, 2 double bedrooms (master with fitted wardrobes), 1 single bedroom, modern bathroom with L-shaped bath, garage, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heated and double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutley Primary School. EPC: D



BIRMINGHAM, Orion Building£775 pcm - Fees
1ST MONTHS RENT FREE. A fantastic opportunity to rent a fully furnished apartment in the heart of Birmingham City Centre. This 1 bed modern property overlooking the Mailbox features open plan living with luxury kitchen with 24 hour concierge service, secure parking, double glazed and electric heating. Viewings highly recommended. EPC: TBC



AMBLECOTE, 41a High Street£760 pcm - Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a new build home on a select development. Featuring homes of 3 generous size bedrooms (master with en-suite) finished to an exceptional standard. Featuring spacious lounge/dining area, well appointed kitchen, downstairs WC, 3 bedrooms with family bathrooms & master bedroom with en-suite, 2 allocated parking spaces, front & rear gardens. These homes will not be available for long. EPC: TBC



BRIERLEY HILL, Brayford Avenue£750 pcm - Fees
A well presented 3 bedroom detached property now available in this very popular location, close to Merry Hill. Comprising of: 2 reception rooms, conservatory, fitted kitchen/utility room, lovely rear garden, 2 double bedrooms & 1 single, bathroom with shower, garage & driveway for 2/3 cars. Available mid December. EPC: D



OLDBURY, The Dingle £750 pcm - Fees
1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! This detached house is situated just off the New Birmingham Road giving easy access to Birmingham, Wolverhampton and M5 motorway. This recently refurbished property features an open plan kitchen/lounge, fitted kitchen with appliances, landing upstairs with enough space to create a study area or relaxation space, 4 large bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, off road parking for several cars, and a large garage. EPC: E



OLDBURY, Broadway £725 pcm - Fees
A large extended traditional link detached house in a quiet cul-de-sac. Entrance porch leading to entrance hall, large through lounge/dining area, study/playroom, superb bathroom with 'P' shaped bath & shower over, 3 double bedrooms, large rear garden, driveway to front for 2 cars. EPC: E



ROWLEY REGIS, Queens Drive£695 pcm - Fees
A very well presented 3 bedroom modern detached family home situated in a very quiet & popular location. This property has an attractive lounge, dining room, modern fitted kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs cloakroom, three good size bedrooms, shower room, gas central heating, ample off road parking, detached garage, beautiful rear garden with decking area. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Hollybank Grove£675 pcm - Fees
Good size semi-detached property situated in a cul-de-sac position close to popular schools and local amenities. Features 3 bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, 2 reception rooms, family bathroom, fully fitted kitchen. Off road parking, gas central heating and double glazed. This house has been newly redecorated and re carpeted. EPC: E



ROWLEY REGIS, Spring Vale Road£650 pcm - Fees
1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! An opportunity to acquire a well maintained traditional detached property in a popular residential location in a quiet cul-de-sac close to local schools, amenities and road links. Featuring a large living room, fitted kitchen with a double range cooker, W.C, 2 double & 1 single bedroom/study, bathroom with shower, driveway/garage. A lovely property not to be missed. Minimum contract 12 months. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Tregarron Road£575 pcm - Fees
Ideally situated for local shops and buses to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Cradley Heath. A well presented semi-detached house features a large lounge, modern kitchen, 3 good sized bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, new double glazing, gas central heating, driveway and garage parking, front and rear gardens. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Haden Arch Court£550 pcm - Fees
Contemporary living in Halesowen. This 1st floor spacious apartment above the archway, within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre and buses, the apartment features gas central heating, double glazing, open plan living room/fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with separate shower cubicle, allocated parking. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Talbot Street£550 pcm - Fees
Step inside this fantastic 3 bedroom terrace property. Renovated throughout within the last 6 months to a very high standard, featuring 2 great size reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, fully fitted bathroom with electric shower, gas central heating system. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Wright Street£525 pcm - Fees
Close to Halesowen Town Centre and Tenterfields Primary School. This end terrace home features gas central heating, cosy living room, dining room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden, on road parking. Available now. Short term let for 6 months, possibly longer. EPC: E



CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close£525 pcm - Fees
Situated in this popular residential area, is this 2nd floor apartment, which overlooks the canal and has its own balcony, comprising of: 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, access to balcony from the master bedroom, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. Well worth an inspection. EPC: G



HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive£525 pcm - Fees
Located within walking distance of central Halesowen. This modern unfurnished 3rd floor apartment, briefly comprising of: spacious living room with access to balcony, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, communal gardens, allocated parking space. EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, Highland Road£495 pcm - Fees
Having undergone a recent modernization, is this lovely end terrace house, and in a sought after location. Featuring a lovely rear lounge, fitted kitchen with washing machine, 2 good size bedrooms with built in wardrobes, house bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, low maintenance rear garden, driveway parking. EPC: D



NETHERTON, Round Street£475 pcm - Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home. Featuring gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars. Popular residential street close to Netherpton High Street, 2 months deposit and a guarantor is required. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING). EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Linden Avenue£425 pcm - Fees
A part furnished 1 bedroom bungalow set in a popular location. Accommodation includes: fitted kitchen, lounge, double bedroom, shower room, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway to fore and rear garden with access from the rear. EPC: F



CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens£425 pcm - Fees
A part furnished 1 bedroom bungalow set in a popular location with local bus stop outside and Old Hill train station close by. This apartment comprises of 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, double glazing, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, unfurnished. EPC: C

Maddy brings a real carnival of music

Maddy Prior and The Carnival Band, Town Hall, Birmingham

WHEN it comes to putting on Christmas shows you would be hard pushed to top Maddy Prior and the Carnival Band with their Carols & Capers show.

With the band playing instruments which are not only unusual but have been specially made, some recreated from old drawings, and playing music, some of which is hundreds of years old, you have a good show without any-

thing else. But throw in the unmistakable voice and presence of Maddy Prior and a choir with at least 50 voices and you have a festive display which is both, rich, diverse and incredibly impressive.

When she was not singing or taking a back seat to the Carnival Band, Prior expressively swished around the stage in flowing skirts to the music which was diverse, complex and thoroughly enjoyable.

There were tunes straight out of the middle ages, traditional carols such as God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen and not so traditional such as A Boy Was Born In Bethlehem.

There was tinsel-a-plenty and festive tunes from Europe and even one with animal masks and impersonations. All in all it was a night of great music and spectacle which keeps the musical traditions of the UK alive.

Danny Farragher

Rusby's mug full of festivities

**Kate Rusby
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham**

LOOKING like a Christmas humbug in her black and white hooped dress and with obligatory tea mug in hand she greeted the assembled Birmingham audience with a massive 'ello!

She then launched into the first of her Christmas songs with Here We Come a Wassailing.

If you have seen Rusby's Christmas show before then you know it's pretty much the same format as the previous year but of course this time there were a few songs from her latest album Ghost thrown in.

With her assembled band which includes hubby Damian O'Kane and a small, but impressive, brass section she sang a mixture of traditional carols such as Joy To The World, Little Town of Bethlehem, Diadem and various versions of While Shepherds Watch.

Rusbyinfects you with her enthusiasm for the season and no matter how many times you see her you leave her show full of Christmas cheer.

DF

REVIEWS



Harmonising - Jersey Boys line-up

Oh, What a Night at musical rollercoaster

**Jersey Boys
Alexandra Theatre**

IT was fast and furious and I loved it - as did the packed Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham.

This Jersey Boys rollercoaster took you on a wonderful journey as it told the story of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks who wrote their own songs, invented their unique sound, and sold 175 million records.

Featuring hit after hit including 'Beggin'', 'Oh, What a Night', 'Sherry', 'Walk Like a Man', 'Bye Bye Baby' and many more, Jersey Boys is a story full of heart, humour,

and most importantly fantastic music.

Tim Driesen as Frankie Valli certainly has the voice for it. All telling their own stories throughout the show the four together - Sam Ferriday as Bob Gaudio, Lewis Griffiths as Nick Massi and Stephen Webb as Tommy DeVito - harmonised beautifully, almost bringing the audience to their feet just a third of the way through and of course up and dancing by the end.

This show runs until January 4. As a festive treat this is real gift.

Sue Attwater

Magic and Christmas anarchy

**The Magical Christmas
Tree Tour
Newhampton Folk Club,
Newhampton Inn**

IT seems you can have anarchy at Christmas and still enjoy yourself and to prove the point Pete Morton, Emily Sanders and Chris Parkinson brought their show to the upper room of the Newhampton Inn, Whitmore Reans.

With clog dancing, Chaucerian rock 'n' roll, upside down, broom and eccentric dancing along with a rather world weary Christmas tree guiding proceedings, it all got a little merry and at times surreal.

But Morton on guitar and vocals, Sanders on fiddle and vocals and Parkinson on a variety of instruments, vocals and Father Jack impersonations brought a really manic sense of fun to proceedings.

Add to this, Parkinson slipping in all sorts of instrumental jokes while sitting in the corner on his piano accordion like a naughty schoolboy and it was a great way to go into the winter night with a smile on your face.

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Robbers jailed for roles in a terrifying raid on club

Rail firm is on track for major service boost

Speed watch move hailed as a success



Pupil Eve Yates, front, joins the speed watch campaigners in Wordsley to discourage fast driving

CAMPAIGNERS say a blitz on speeding motorists in Wordsley has led to a significant fall in the numbers caught. Residents have been holding their own community speed watch scheme in the town after growing concerns over the number of accidents.

Police have joined volunteers from the community to lead the second in a series of monthly speed clampdowns.

School

Only three motorists were found to be speeding during the latest crackdown near Belle Vue Primary School.

Campaigners led by ward councillor Derrick Hemingsley and neighbourhood police conducted the scheme one week-day afternoon last week.

It was designed to warn motorists to adhere to the 30mph limits near the school, off Lawnswood Road.

More sessions will take place in the New Year including outside Dingle Community Primary School.

Children focus of campaign over domestic abuse

A PROJECT raising awareness of domestic abuse especially its impact on children over Christmas has been re-launched in Dudley.

This month, Safe and Sound, Dudley's community safety partnership, is staging its Twelve Days of Christmas campaign.

Officials say the scheme aims to highlight that children are often the hidden victims of domestic abuse because in nine out of ten cases they are involved in some way.

People who suspect a child is being harmed or neglected or is living with domestic abuse are asked to call the police public protection unit on 0845 113 5000.

Alternatively people can call the national domestic abuse helpline on 08082 000247 or in an emergency dial 999.

Dudley Councillor Gaye Partridge, who is responsible for community safety in the borough, said: "This campaign is a stark reminder that Christmas isn't always a joyful time.

"Children are undoubtedly the hidden victims of domestic abuse and it's important that everyone takes responsibility for reporting if they suspect a child is at risk.

"Domestic abuse is a crime, one which will not be tolerated in Dudley."

A MAN had a blade pressed to his neck and a woman was threatened with a hammer during a terrifying raid.

A four-strong gang burst into the Brandhall Conservative Club in Ashes Road, Oldbury, shortly after closing time on May 18, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. Two bar staff were there with the partner of one of the women and his 16-year-old son.

Mr Oliver Woolhouse, prosecuting, said: "Michelle Kelly shut the bar and walked towards the foyer where she saw her partner Michael Fitzgerald and his son being confronted by a man in a hooded top. Three others followed armed with a hammer and knives. They made the occupants sit on the floor and took their phones."

A large knife was held to the back of Mr Fitzgerald's neck. Miss Kelly saw what was happening, activated a secret alarm and tried to lock the door

By John Scott

to the bar which the gang kicked in. Robber Gavin Stephens threatened to 'smash faces in' with the hammer and ordered the staff to open the safe in the cellar.

The gang were handed £2,250 cash which they took, leaving the two staff, Mr Fitzgerald and his son locked in the cellar, where they were later found by police.

The robbers had the cash bagged up and were ready to flee when officers, who had been alerted by the secret alarm, arrived cornering 20-year-old Stephens and Kalem Dunnaway, 18, in the clubhouse. CS gas spray had to be used to subdue them.

Dunnaway was detained at the scene and Stephens was caught following a short chase. The 16-year-old's mobile phone was found in the pocket of the latter, who threw a hammer

into a bush from which it was later recovered, said Mr Woolhouse. All the cash was recovered but the other two raiders escaped and have not been traced.

Mr Anthony Bell, defending, said the robbery was totally out of character for Dunnaway, from Mount Road, Rowley Regis, who had no previous convictions. He added: "It is unusual for a young man's first appearance in court to be for a crime of this nature. He was not carrying a weapon and his involvement was peripheral."

Stephens, of Hackett Road, Rowley Regis, who had previous convictions for robbery, theft and assault, admitted robbery and was sent to a young offenders institution for six years three months. Dunnaway pleaded guilty and was ordered to be detained for four and a half years.

Judge John Warner told them: "It was a terrifying incident. Mercifully nobody was actually injured."

THOUSANDS more seats per week will be available on trains through the West Midlands as part of a £62 million investment in services.

Rail firm London Midland hailed the plan as its biggest timetable shake-up in six years, promising more services in and out of Birmingham and to London.

The new timetable comes into effect from December 15 and will mean Stafford will gain 4,000 more seats to London each week and faster journeys.

On the Trent Valley line there will be 2,000 extra seats a week to Birmingham.

London Midland announced £62m worth of new trains, new services and 139,000 more seats

per week across its network. This includes 75,000 extra seats in and out of Birmingham New Street and more direct services to the capital.

London Midland managing director Patrick Verwer said: "With more people travelling with us each year our passengers are telling us they want more services, quicker journeys and more seats. We have listened and taken the opportunity with our new trains to make as many improvements for as many passengers as we can.

"With £62 million invested in new trains, this is the biggest change to our timetable in six years."

For more details on the changes to local services visit www.londonmidland.com/goodnews

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Snow being dumped in Wolverhampton, February, 1947



Tarmac Ltd help thaw a road in Cannock on February 10



Workman laying a new sewer in Lower Gornal in 1947



Skaters at Dartmouth Park, West Bromwich, in 1963

Hidden depths of a snowy winter

WITH blizzards, snowstorms and freezing conditions having swept across North America, many older people will have thought 'we're for it next'.

For so often in the past, harsh weather conditions in the USA have been the harbinger of bitter cold and heavy snowfalls here in Britain. And with such thoughts whirling around our minds, memories often turn to the worst winters we have endured.

For me it was the winter of 1962-63. I was just six but still have vivid memories of that most icy of times. Heavy snow began falling on Boxing Day and soon afterwards fierce blizzards transformed the landscape, covering it with massive snowdrifts. Then came the big freeze.

I remember but when my Mom and Dad talked about bad winters they always highlighted the winter of 1947 and that is the one that June M Lloyd brings to mind.

She writes: "One night I found myself unable to sleep. Sitting down, sipping a hot drink my mind drifted back to my childhood. I was

MEMORY LANE

by Carl Chinn

eleven years old and lived with my parents and four sisters and brothers at 12 Bristol Hall Lane, Warley, Worcestershire, now known as Sandwell. The war was over but everything was still rationed. Mom had books of coupons for food, clothes, fuel. Well I awoke one morning to find there was deep snow everywhere.

"I looked out of my bedroom window; the snow was so deep it was right over people's front doors and windows. I woke my sister Sheila who was nine years old and told her to come and look.

"She was so scared when she saw the snow, that she ran downstairs crying for mom. I followed her downstairs to the kitchen, mom, dad and my other brothers and sisters were crammed into the kitchen.

"There was a roaring fire which kept sizzling as the snow melted above the chimney. How would we get out to the toilet? I asked mom, she said, 'You will have to use the white bucket in the bathroom until your dad and I try to unblock the back door.'

"Dad tried to clear a path to the coal house using the coal shovel we kept near the fire-place. Then my older brothers started to help him. It was like living in a snow house, I read about those at school. Dad and my brothers worked hard all that day and finally made a path to the coalhouse and toilet. The snow was piled so high you couldn't see the back garden.

"We could hear Mr Fletcher next door doing the same thing. There was a lot of cussing going on. Mr Fletcher's chickens were buried alive under the snow. He later shared them with us neighbours.

Struggled

"All the men and boys worked hard in our street all that day and the next day trying to make a path to the 'Two Brewers', a pub at the bottom of our street, and to Mrs Smith's grocery shop.

"It was so eerie walking between those banks of snow. 'I struggled back with the shopping, mainly tinned food, flour, butter, lard, bread and candles. It was a good job Mrs Smith had received a delivery the day before the snow came down. The radio came on and they said more snow was coming. No-one could go to work as the roads were blocked.

"The radio came on at eight o'clock that night warning people not to use their gas. This was in case they blew up. There were icicles on the windows upstairs so we couldn't sleep there.

"We dragged some mattresses downstairs to sleep on. The boys on one and us girls on the other. We had blankets over us as it was too cold upstairs. I think mom and dad slept in the bathroom."

June adds: "Mom banked the kitchen fire up with wet slack so it would stay in all night. We slept in the front room downstairs; it was so cold even our dog, Gyp, slept on our bed at night.

"We had to be careful with the food as there were no deliveries to the shop; no-one could get to work as there were no buses running.

"We listened to the radio for the news every night and played cards to pass the time. We had porridge for breakfast with salt on; dinner was powdered eggs, and bread and lard. The main meals were eaten by the grown-ups although we had soup and bread made from the chicken or rabbit bones.

"I remember dad breaking up some chairs and the wardrobe vanished from our bedroom to keep the fire going. We played out in the

snow tunnels sometimes, but not for long as it was so cold. All the neighbours helped each other and shared what food they had.

"Finally the council men were able to clear the main roads so that people could go back to work. Bread was brought round on a sledge pulled by a horse, fresh bread from Grant's bakery, it tasted wonderful.

"My brother Stan and I had to go to the coal yard at Smethwick to get some coal and coke. We had to pawn dad's suit first to get some money and I had to do mom's shopping on the slate until the wages were paid. It was hard work as the pavements weren't clear.

"It was very hard work helping my brother to push the pram full of wet coal and coke back home through the snow; still he did give me a ride in the pram going there.

"There was no schools open yet it was great fun building snowmen and throwing snowballs at each other. It wasn't dark at night either as the snow made everywhere lighter. The only sounds you heard over those weeks were the men clearing the snow away and us children shouting to one another.

"Otherwise it was so quiet; no birds were singing or flying around. I've never seen snow like that before and hope I never do again!

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Christmas Day

BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV	Ch4	Ch5
 <p>Michael McIntyre's Very Christmassy Christmas Show, on at 10.40pm</p> <p>6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. 9.00 The Gruffalo (R) 9.30 On Angel Wings (R) 10.00 Come and Join the Celebration Traditional service from St George's Church in Leeds. 11.00 Only Fools and Horses Christmas special from 1986. Rodney dates an aristocrat's daughter. (R) 12.00 Wallace & Gromit: A Grand Day Out The animated heroes go to the moon. (R) 12.25 FILM: Gnomeo & Juliet (2011) Animated comedy, with the voices of James McAvoy and Emily Blunt. *** 1.40 Shaun the Sheep The animals decorate the farmhouse for Christmas. (R) 1.50 BBC News; Weather. 2.00 Top of the Pops Christmas The year's most successful chart acts.</p>	 <p>James May's Toy Stories: Action Man at the Speed of Sound, 5.10pm</p> <p>6.00 FILM: Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas (2003) Animated adventure, with the voice of Brad Pitt. *** 7.15 FILM: Short Circuit (1986) Sci-fi comedy adventure, starring Steve Guttenberg. *** 8.50 FILM: Pollyanna (1960) Family drama, starring Hayley Mills. *** 11.00 Carols from King's (R) 12.15 To the Manor Born Audrey takes Christmas very seriously. (R) 12.45 The Choir: New Military Wives Part two of two. The women perform at the Royal Albert Hall. (R) 1.45 60 Years of Carols from King's The history of the annual Christmas service broadcast. 2.45 Kiss Me, Kate at the Proms A performance of Cole Porter's musical at the Royal Albert Hall.</p>	 <p>David calls at the bistro to see Nick in Coronation Street, on at 8.00pm</p> <p>6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 6.25 Pat & Stan (R) 6.30 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures (R) 6.40 Dino Dan (R) 6.55 Sooty (R) 7.05 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.20 Almost Naked Animals Children's animation. (R) 7.40 Horrid Henry (R) 7.55 Horrid Henry (R) 8.10 Horrid Henry (R) 8.25 Weekend at Christmas New series. Aled Jones presents a festive edition of the chat show. 9.25 FILM: Valiant (2005) Computer-animated adventure, with the voice of Ewan McGregor. *** 10.55 FILM: Back to the Future (1985) Sci-fi comedy adventure, starring Michael J Fox. *** 1.10 FILM: Nanny McPhee (2005) Period fantasy, starring Emma Thompson. ***</p>	 <p>Sarah Millican, Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special, on at 9.00pm</p> <p>6.00 FILM: The Ugly Duckling and Me (2006) *** 7.30 Prep & Landing (R) 7.55 Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice (R) 8.20 Father Christmas (R) 8.55 FILM: Animals United (2010) *** 10.45 The Simpsons (R) 11.15 The Simpsons (R) 11.45 The Simpsons (R) 12.15 Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas Festive spin-off of the animated films, with the voice of John Leguizamo. (R) 12.45 The Snowman Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 1.20 The Snowman and the Snowdog (R) 1.50 The Alternative Christmas Message 1.55 Channel 4 News Summary 2.05 FILM: Scrooged (1988) Christmas comedy, starring Bill Murray. ***</p>	 <p>Justin Hawkins, Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs, on at 8.00pm</p> <p>6.00 Milkshake! 9.10 Access Showbiz news and gossip. 9.20 Andre Rieu: Christmas Around the World A Christmas concert by the violinist, featuring sumptuously festive performances of White Christmas, Hallelujah and Jingle Bells. Part of Sing-Along Christmas Day. 10.20 FILM: Scroogie (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. *** 12.35 The Sound of Music - Live! A novice nun brings joy into the lives of seven children when she becomes their governess. Adaptation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical, starring Carrie Underwood. (R)</p>
<p>3.00 The Queen</p> <p>3.10 Puss in Boots (2011) Premiere. Animated comedy spin-off, with the voice of Antonio Banderas. ***</p> <p>4.40 BBC News; Weather.</p> <p>5.00 Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special Six previous contestants compete for the Christmas trophy.</p> <p>6.15 Doctor Who</p> <p>7.15 Miranda The hit sitcom returns for the final two episodes, which pick up where the last one left off, with the shop owner deciding whether to accept Gary or Mike's proposal.</p> <p>7.50 Call the Midwife Chummy is asked to help out at a mother-and-baby home where residents have little in the way of Christmas cheer, while Cynthia assists two former patients of a psychiatric hospital.</p> <p>9.00 EastEnders Hour-long episode. Christmas Day gets off to a good start for the Carters but soon goes downhill when Sylvie arrives - and then Dean turns up. Cindy is alarmed by a suspicious gift.</p> <p>10.05 Mrs Brown's Boys The first of two festive editions. Mrs Brown tries to work out what is inside a parcel addressed to Cathy and discovers Rory is planning to have plastic surgery.</p> <p>10.40 Michael McIntyre's Very Christmassy Christmas Show An hour of festive entertainment, with Jamie Oliver, Rob Brydon, Barbara Windsor and Robbie Williams.</p> <p>11.40 BBC News; Weather.</p> <p>11.55 On Christmas Night Adjoa Andoh reflects on the implications of Jesus's birth for his mother.</p> <p>12.00 Not Going Out Christmas Special (R) 12.45 Would I Lie to You? at Christmas (R) 1.15 George Michael at the Palais Garnier, Paris (R) 2.15 FILM: The Heartbreak Kid (2007) *** 4.05 Skiing Weatherview 4.10 BBC News</p>	<p>5.00 Sign Zone: The Queen Her Majesty's annual address. (R)</p> <p>5.10 James May's Toy Stories: Action Man at the Speed of Sound The Top Gear presenter attempts to propel an Action Man through the 'sound barrier'.</p> <p>6.15 Morecambe and Wise in Pieces: The Sketches Penelope Keith presents another edition of the occasional series, this time trawling the archives for bite-sized routines from the comedy duo's shows.</p> <p>7.15 Christmas University Challenge Distinguished graduates of the universities of Edinburgh and Leeds compete, with novelist Philippa Gregory and football commentator Jacqui Oatley among the contestants.</p> <p>7.45 Dad's Army Mainwaring finds himself bidding against Pike for an orange at a fundraising bazaar. Last in the series. (R)</p> <p>8.30 Blackadder's Christmas Carol Kindly Victorian pushover Ebenezer Blackadder is visited by the Spirit of Christmas and gains an insight into the dastardly deeds of his ancestors. Starring Rowan Atkinson.</p> <p>9.00 Tim Rice - A Life in Song A concert from London's Royal Festival Hall celebrating the work of the Oscar-winning lyricist, who also reminisces about his career, in the company of Michael Grade.</p> <p>10.30 QI Christmas Stephen Fry hosts a festive edition of the comedy quiz, with Carrie Fisher, Bill Bailey, Phill Jupitus and Alan Davies.</p> <p>11.00 Marvellous Fact-based feature-length comedy drama about the life of Neil Baldwin. Toby Jones stars. (R)</p> <p>12.30 FILM: The Producers (2005) *** 2.35 This Is BBC Two</p>	<p>3.00 The Queen Her Majesty's annual address.</p> <p>3.10 The Queen's Garden Part one of two. Exploring Buckingham Palace Garden.</p> <p>4.10 ITV News and Weather</p> <p>4.20 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas Stop-motion animated adventure based on the film Elf.</p> <p>5.20 New You've Been Framed! At Christmas A festive selection of funny clips, narrated by Harry Hill.</p> <p>5.50 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas The comedian helps out at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home over the festive period.</p> <p>6.50 ITV News and Weather</p> <p>7.00 Emmerdale Hour-long episode. Bernice and Robert threaten Andy and Katie's wedding day. Laurel takes in an unwelcome dinner guest, Lachlan leads Belle astray and Jai proposes to Megan.</p> <p>8.00 Coronation Street Hour-long episode. Kylie is horrified when Callum turns up at her doorstep, Amy and Tony are taken aback by how much Steve has spent and Tracy grabs Tony under the mistletoe.</p> <p>9.00 Downton Abbey Lord Sinderby invites the Crawleys to a grouse-shooting party at Brancaster Castle, but the butler has an axe to grind and a scandalous secret threatens to derail the holiday.</p> <p>11.00 ITV News and Weather</p> <p>11.15 You've Got to Love Christmas Jane Horrocks narrates a comic trawl through the TV archives, guiding viewers through the pitfalls and perils of the festive season, with contributions from famous faces. (R)</p> <p>12.15 Christmas Carols on ITV A candlelit Christmas Eve carol service from St Mary's Church in Prestwich. (R) 1.15 FILM: Murder, She Wrote: The Celtic Riddle (2003) Mystery, starring Angela Lansbury. *** 2.45 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)</p>	<p>4.00 Big (1988) Comedy, starring Tom Hanks. ***</p> <p>6.00 Arthur Christmas (2011) Premiere. Santa's son tries to make sure a girl accidentally missed off his father's list gets her presents. Animated comedy, with the voices of James McAvoy and Jim Broadbent. ***</p> <p>8.00 Frozen at Christmas The makers of Disney's Frozen, the most successful animated film of all time, talk about its creation and production, and the writing and performance of its most popular songs.</p> <p>9.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special Festive fun with the comedian and Terry Wogan, Sarah Millican, Dan Stevens, Emma Willis and Gino D'Acampo. Sam Smith, George Ezra and McBusted provide the music. Last in the series.</p> <p>11.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show, with guests Andrew Flintoff, Kevin Bridges and Roisin Conaty joining team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson. (R)</p> <p>12.00 Father Ted Christmas Special Fathers Ted and Dougal endure their worst Christmas ever when they get lost in a lingerie department, leaving them in a highly embarrassing predicament. Festive edition from 1996. (R) 1.05 Father Ted The priests go on holiday. (R) 1.35 Father Ted The priests organise a raffle. (R) 2.00 Father Ted Craggy Island's most famous religious relic is upgraded. (R) 2.30 FILM: Crazy Heart (2009) A washed-up alcoholic country music star is granted a new lease of life when he falls for a journalist. Drama, starring an Oscar-winning Jeff Bridges, with Maggie Gyllenhaal. *** 4.25 Secret Eaters (R) 5.20 Small Animal Hospital A horse with hoof problems visits the vets. (R) 5.50 FILM: Flicka (2006) Family drama, with Alison Lohman. ***</p>	<p>3.25 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968) Children's musical adventure, starring Dick Van Dyke. ***</p> <p>6.10 Michael Buble's Christmas Songbook The Canadian crooner sings Christmas classics and appears in a variety of comedy sketches, and is joined by Rod Stewart, Blake Shelton, Carly Rae Jepsen, Elmo and Oscar the Grouch. Part of the Sing-Along Christmas Day strand. (R)</p> <p>7.05 Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up! Festive entertainment from 1982, with guests including Eric Clapton, Jimmy Cricket, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters joining the Cockney duo. Part of Sing-Along Christmas Day. (R)</p> <p>8.00 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs A countdown of songs guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing, including classics by the Jackson 5, Jona Lewie, Band Aid, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, and Slade. Part of Sing-Along Christmas Day. (R)</p> <p>11.05 Muriel's Wedding (1994) A downtrodden Abba-obsessed woman heads for the bright lights of Sydney to fulfil her dreams of the perfect wedding. Comedy, with Toni Collette, Bill Hunter and Rachel Griffiths. Part of Sing-Along Christmas Day. ***</p> <p>1.20 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 4.00 House Doctor Ann Maurice visits Headcorn in Kent, where she and Tris Payne try to create the illusion of space in a tiny cottage for a couple who want to sell up before they have a baby. (R) 4.25 House Doctor A flat in Kensal Green, west London. (R) 4.50 Wildlife SOS The work of an animal sanctuary. (R) 5.10 House Doctor A property in Ashover Hay, Derbyshire. (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS</p>

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

Boxing Day

BBC 1



Nick says goodbye to his family in EastEnders, shown at 8.00pm

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. **9.00 FILM: Pinocchio (1940)** Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Dick Jones. **★★★★ 10.25 CBeebies Peter Pan** Musical adaptation of JM Barrie's tale. **11.05 Room on the Broom (R)** **11.30 FILM: Cool Runnings (1993)** Fact-based sporting comedy, starring John Candy. **★★★★ 1.05 BBC News: Weather.** **1.15 BBC Regional News and Weather.** **1.25 The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm** Comedy drama, starring Harry Hill as the absent-minded inventor. **(R)** **2.20 My Family Christmas Special** The Harpers celebrate Christmas 2039, with an 80-year-old Ben as grumpy as ever. **(R)**

BBC 2



Festive skits in Victoria Wood's Midlife Christmas, 8.00pm

6.10 FILM: The Road to El Dorado (2000) Animated adventure, with the voices of Kenneth Branagh and Kevin Kline. **★★★★ 7.30 FILM: College Road Trip (2008)** Family comedy, starring Martin Lawrence. **★ 8.50 Queen of Tigers: Natural World Special** Colin Stafford-Johnson films the life of tiger Machli in India. **(R)** **9.50 Ten Pieces from King's 60 Years of Carols from King's** The history of the annual Christmas service broadcast. **(R)** **11.40 FILM: On the Town (1949)** Musical, starring Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Jules Munshin. **★★★★ 1.15 Gene Kelly: Talking Pictures** A profile of actor and dancer Gene Kelly. **(R)** **1.50 FILM: Singin' in the Rain (1952)** Musical comedy, starring Gene Kelly. **★★★★**

ITV



Kermit the Frog features in A Christmas Cracker, shown at 8.00pm

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **(R)** **6.20 Pat & Stan (R)** **6.30 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures (R)** **6.40 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures (R)** **6.55 Sooty (R)** **7.05 Almost Naked Animals (R)** **7.20 Almost Naked Animals (R)** **7.35 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)** **7.50 Super 4 (R)** **8.10 Super 4 (R)** **8.25 Weekend at Christmas 9.25 Dinner Date: Australia (R)** **10.25 Celebrity Squares (R)** **11.25 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas (R)** **12.30 ITV News and Weather** **12.45 The Chase: Christmas Special** With Steve Pemberton, Paula Lane, Ben Miller and Mr Burton. Last in the series. **(R)** **1.45 FILM: Back to the Future Part II (1989)** Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J Fox. **★★★**

Ch4



Bear's Wild Weekend with Ben Stiller, shown at 8.00pm

7.25 The Bear Animation based on the Raymond Briggs tale. **(R)** **7.55 The Morning Line** Nick Luck and guests are at Kempton Park to preview today's races. **9.00 The Big Bang Theory** Leonard's mother visits. **(R)** **9.25 The Big Bang Theory** Leonard fails to get Sheldon into the Christmas mood. **(R)** **9.55 FILM: Inspector Gadget (1999)** Disney comedy adventure, starring Matthew Broderick. **★ 11.30 FILM: Horton Hears a Who! (2008)** An elephant discovers a city on a speck of dust and vows to protect it, but the other animals think he has gone mad. Animated comedy, with the voices of Jim Carrey and Steve Carell. **★★★★ 1.15 Channel 4 Racing** Clare Balding and Nick Luck present live coverage.

Ch5



Tommy Cooper's Christmas Special, shown at 9.25pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.55 Access Showbiz news and gossip. **10.05 FILM: Carry On Constable (1960)** A staff shortage forces a police inspector to take on four bumbling new recruits, who only increase the crime rate. Comedy, starring Sid James, Kenneth Williams and Kenneth Connor. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(b/w)** **★★★★ 11.45 FILM: Carry On Teacher (1959)** A headmaster's hopes of landing a job at a better school are ruined by his naughty pupils, who do not want him to leave. Comedy, with Ted Ray, Kenneth Connor and Kenneth Williams. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(b/w)** **★★★★ 1.30 FILM: Carry On Nurse (1959)** Comedy, starring Kenneth Williams and Hattie Jacques. **(b/w)** **★★★**

3.15 Monsters, Inc (2001) Two monsters try to get a little girl who has wandered into their world back home before anyone finds out. Pixar animated comedy, with the voices of John Goodman and Billy Crystal. **★★★★**

4.40 The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists! (2012) Premiere. Animated comedy, with the voice of Hugh Grant. **★★★**

6.05 BBC News: Weather.

6.20 Midlands Today: Weather.

6.25 Still Open All Hours New series. David Jason returns as shopkeeper Granville, who is forced to take extra security precautions – causing him no end of discomfort. The next episode is on Sunday at 7.30pm.

6.55 The Boy in the Dress Family comedy based on David Walliams' children's book about a 12-year-old boy who shocks his family and friends when he starts cross-dressing.

8.00 EastEnders The fallout continues for the Carters as more lies are exposed, while Dot is heartbroken when Charlie hands Nick his ferry tickets and drives him away from Walford.

8.30 Avengers Assemble (2012) Premiere. Iron Man, Thor, Captain America and the Hulk unite to defend Earth from an alien invasion. Superhero adventure, with Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans and Chris Hemsworth. **★★★★**

10.40 BBC News

10.50 BBC Regional News and Weather: National Lottery Update

11.00 Match of the Day Highlights of the Boxing Day Premier League fixtures, which included Chelsea v West Ham United and Arsenal v Queens Park Rangers.

12.35 EastEnders (R) **3.30 Weather for the Week Ahead** **3.35 BBC News**

3.30 Victoria Wood: That Musical We Made The comedienne presents a behind-the-scenes look at the film That Day We Sang which she wrote and directed, as well as the events that inspired the story.

4.30 Final Score Jason Mohammad presents a round-up of this afternoon's results from the Premier League and Football League.

5.25 War Horse at the Proms The BBC Concert Orchestra is joined by Gareth Malone and the Military Wives for music and stories from the First World War, inspired by Michael Morpurgo's novel.

6.45 Christmas University Challenge Graduates of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and Balliol College, Oxford, compete. Doctor Who star Dan Starkey and Liberal Democrat MP Alan Beith are among the contestants.

7.15 The Two Ronnies: Christmas Show Vintage comedy from Messrs Barker and Corbett. **(R)**

8.00 Victoria Wood's Midlife Christmas A festive special from 2009 that attempts to cram a night's Christmas viewing into an hour. Highlights include the Midlife Olympics, and costume drama Lark Pies to Cranchesterford. **(R)**

9.00 That Day We Sang A children's choir reunites in 1969 after a 40-year interval, prompting two members to reflect on their lives. Victoria Wood's musical drama, with Imelda Staunton and Michael Ball.

10.30 Hunky Dory (2011) Premiere. A teacher at a 1970s Welsh school persuades her students to stage a musical based on Shakespeare's The Tempest. Drama, with Minnie Driver. **★★★**

12.15 FILM: The Winslow Boy (1999) Drama, with Nigel Hawthorne. **★★★★ 1.55 This Is BBC Two**

3.45 Off Their Rockers Velma gets racy in a photo booth. **(R)**

4.15 Downton Abbey Lord Sinderby invites the Crawleys to a grouse-shooting party at Brancaster Castle, but the butler has an axe to grind and a scandalous secret threatens to derail the story. **(R)**

6.15 ITV News and Weather

6.30 Emmerdale Jai spots the man who sold him Archie and Megan wants to take action, knowing this is her only chance to find Rachel. Katie comes up with an idea to get Robert out of her life.

7.00 Coronation Street Hour-long episode. Gary has an unexpected encounter after trying to steal from the cafe till, and a drunk David makes a shock announcement in the Rovers.

8.00 A Christmas Cracker Bradley Walsh hosts a festive spectacular from the Hammersmith Apollo with a variety of guests, including Al Murray, Katherine Jenkins, the Muppets, the Vamps and Flawless.

9.00 Birds of a Feather New series. The hit sitcom begins its second series on ITV with a Christmas special. Dorien splashes out on a trip to the Canary Islands, taking Sharon and Tracey with her.

9.30 Through the Christmas Keyhole Keith Lemon noses around the homes of mystery celebrities and challenges the panel – Jonathan Ross, Louis Walsh and Kym Marsh – to work out their identities.

10.30 ITV News and Weather

10.45 Out of Sight (1998) A US Marshal pursues an escaped convict, but as the chase intensifies, so do their feelings for each other. Romantic crime drama, starring George Clooney. **★★★**

12.50 Jackpot247 3.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA (R) **3.45 ITV Nightscreen**

3.50 Turner & Hooch (1989) Family canine comedy, starring Tom Hanks. **★★★**

5.50 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

6.00 The Simpsons Four tales celebrating the festive season. Bart hatches a plan to hold Santa Claus hostage, and Katy Perry leads the family in a rendition of The 39 Days of Christmas.

6.30 Hollyoaks Sinead's life hangs in the balance, while Ste and John Paul's future looks uncertain, and Nancy is left with a difficult decision to make.

7.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD Coulson and Whitehall's forces meet in an explosive confrontation that dramatically alters the fate of everyone involved, while Skye discovers some shocking secrets about her past.

8.00 Bear's Wild Weekend with Ben Stiller Survivalist Bear Grylls is partnered with actor and director Ben Stiller for a 48-hour, action-filled trek into the wilds of Scotland that pushes them to the limit. **(R)**

9.00 The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2014 Richard Ayoade, David Mitchell, Mel B, Micky Flanagan, Sarah Millican and Kevin Bridges battle it out to see who knows the most about the past 12 months. Jimmy Carr hosts.

11.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special Festive fun with guests Terry Wogan, Sarah Millican, Dan Stevens, Emma Willis and Gino D'Acampo. Last in the series. **(R)**

1.05 FILM: Legend (1985) Fantasy adventure, with Tom Cruise. **★★** **2.45 FILM: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)** Western, starring Paul Newman. **★★★★ 4.35 Small Animal Hospital (R)** **5.00 Small Animal Hospital (R)** **5.25 FILM: Flicka 2 (2010)** Premiere. Family drama, starring Tammin Sursok. **★★★**

3.15 The Ladykillers (1955) Ealing black comedy, starring Alec Guinness. **★★★★**

5.00 A Shot in the Dark (1964) Comedy, starring Peter Sellers. **★★★**

7.05 Rob Brydon Live A stand-up show recorded at Norwich's Theatre Royal during the comedian and actor's first UK tour in 2009, featuring comic tales, impressions, songs and anecdotes. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(R)**

8.00 Morecambe & Wise Live! 1973 The duo's performance at the Ashcroft Theatre in Croydon's Fairfield Halls in October 1973, which was the only one of their stage shows captured on film. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(R)**

9.25 Tommy Cooper's Christmas Special Festive edition of the comic magician's show from 1974, featuring music by Dana and Vic Damone and a guest appearance by French puppeteer Andre Tahon. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(R)**

10.25 Carry On Christmas The gang's first TV special, originally broadcast in 1969, which consists of sketches based on A Christmas Carol. With Sid James, Barbara Windsor and Frankie Howerd. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(R)**

11.30 Greatest Ever Carry On Films A rundown of the most memorable moments from the classic comedy film series, including flying bikinis, suggestive laughs and infamous catchphrases. Part of Best of British Comedy Day. **(R)**

12.35 FILM: Carry On Spying (1964) Comedy, starring Kenneth Williams. **(b/w)** **★★★★ 2.20 SuperCasino 3.10 Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights (R)** **4.00 Great Scientists (R)** **4.25 House Doctor (R)** **4.45 House Doctor (R)** **5.10 House Doctor (R)** **5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)**

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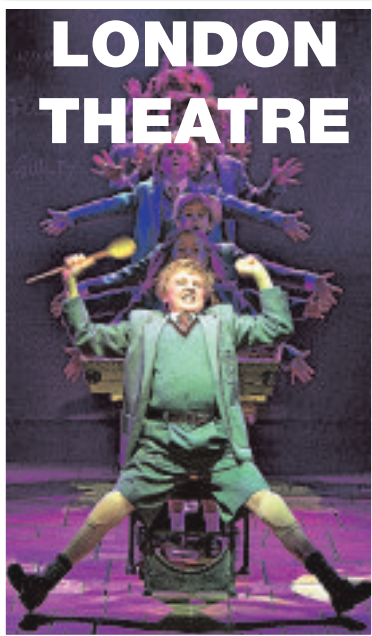
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New Year's Eve

BBC 1



Queen + Adam Lambert Rock Big Ben Live, shown at 11.15pm

6.00 Breakfast Round-up of national and international news, plus the latest from the money markets. **9.00 FILM: The Cat in the Hat (2003)** Comedy fantasy, starring Mike Myers. **★ ★ 10.15 FILM: Eight Below (2006)** A blizzard forces an Antarctic guide to abandon his huskies, which must now rely on their pack instinct to survive. Disney adventure, starring Paul Walker and Bruce Greenwood. **★ ★ ★ 12.05 Bargain Hunt (R)** **12.50 BBC News 1.00 BBC Regional News:** Weather. **1.10 FILM: Ratatouille (2007)** Pixar animated comedy, with the voice of Patton Oswalt. **★ ★ ★ ★ 2.50 FILM: Monsters vs Aliens (2009)** Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. **★ ★ ★**

BBC 2



Mock the Week New Year's Eve Special, shown at 10.50pm

6.10 Sign Zone: Secrets of the Castle with Ruth, Peter and Tom The team explores the construction of a castle's defences. (R) **7.10 Natural World: Empire of the Desert Ants (R)** **8.10 FILM: Saboteur (1942)** Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Robert Cummings. (b/w) **★ ★ ★ 9.55 Alfred Hitchcock: Talking Pictures (R)** **10.35 FILM: Shadow of a Doubt (1943)** Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Joseph Cotten. (b/w) **★ ★ ★ ★ 12.20 The Hairy Bikers' Asian Adventure** Dave Myers and Si King are entertained by a geisha in Kyoto. (R) **1.20 FILM: Becoming Jane (2006)** Romantic period drama, starring Anne Hathaway and James McAvoy. **★ ★ ★**

ITV



Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This, shown at 10.00pm

6.00 Dinner Date Joel from Manchester picks three blind dates. (R) **7.00 Good Morning Britain** Sir David Attenborough chats to Kate Garraway about his new documentary series: Conquest of the Skies. **8.30 Lorraine** Entertainment and fashion news. **9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show** Guests air their differences. (R) **10.30 Judge Rinder** Real-life cases in a studio courtroom. (R) **11.30 Who's Doing the Dishes?** Footballer Wes Brown plays host. (R) **12.25 All Star Family Fortunes** With Rav Wilding and Blythe Duff. (R) **1.10 ITV News and Weather** **1.20 Secret Dealers** Items include a "grotesque" fish vase and a diamond cluster ring. (R) **2.20 The Queen's Garden (R)**

Ch4



The success of Disney's film, Frozen at Christmas, on at 8.00pm

6.20 How I Met Your Mother (R) **6.40 How I Met Your Mother** Briny Spears guest stars. (R) **7.05 Everybody Loves Raymond (R)** **7.30 FILM: The Valley of Gwangi (1969)** Fantasy Western, starring James Franciscus. **★ ★ 9.20 FILM: The Brady Bunch Movie (1995)** Comedy based on the 1970s sitcom, starring Shelley Long. **★ ★ ★ 11.00 The Big Bang Theory (R)** **11.25 The Simpsons** Bart is knocked down by Mr Burns' car. (R) **11.55 The Simpsons** Homer fears he has only 24 hours to live. (R) **12.25 FILM: Five Children and It (2004)** Children's fantasy, with Kenneth Branagh. **★ ★ 2.15 FILM: Home Alone 3 (1997)** Comedy sequel, starring Alex D Linz. **★ ★ ★**

Ch5



The success of the Swedish group, The Abba Years, 12.00am

6.00 Milkshake! 10.10 World's Strongest Man 2014 Action from the fourth and penultimate heat at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, which featured three-time champion Zydrunas Savickas. (R) **11.10 FILM: Carry On Regardless (1961)** Seven bungling handymen have to prove they can hold down a job when their landlord tries to evict them. Slapstick comedy, starring Sid James, Charles Hawtrey and Kenneth Williams. (b/w) **★ ★ 1.00 FILM: The Vikings (1958)** A Norse warrior fights to claim the Northumbrian throne, unaware his rival for the crown is really his half-brother. Adventure, with Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. **★ ★ ★ ★**

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

4.15 Top of the Pops New Year's Eve Fearnie Cotton and Reggie Yates review the year in music.

5.20 Pointless Celebrities A star-studded version of the unorthodox general knowledge quiz. (R)

6.05 BBC News

6.20 Midlands Today; Weather.

6.35 Celebrity Mastermind Steve Pemberton, Harry Shearer, Kate Thornton and Tony Law answer questions on subjects including the Coen brothers' films, George Michael and Second World War fighter aircraft.

7.05 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008) The globe-trotting archaeologist races against Soviet agents to find a mysterious artefact of untold power. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford and Cate Blanchett. **★ ★ ★**

9.00 Mapp and Lucia Miss Lucia introduces a series of musical evenings, although Mapp notices the locals are tiring of her bossy ways and is keen to encourage a revolt. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update

10.15 The Graham Norton Show Graham invites another line-up of A-list guests to huddle up on the sofa and help him welcome in the new year.

11.15 Queen + Adam Lambert Rock Big Ben Live Brian May and Roger Taylor join forces with Adam Lambert at the Central Hall in London's Westminster, bringing in the new year with a concert of Queen's greatest hits.

11.55 New Year's Eve Fireworks

12.10 Queen + Adam Lambert Rock Big Ben Live 12.30 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special (R) **1.10 John Bishop Live: Elvis Has Left the Building (R)** **2.20 FILM: Old School (2003)** **★ ★ ★ 3.50 Weather for the Week Ahead** **3.55 BBC News**

3.10 Coast Australia (R)

4.00 Big Dreams Small Spaces Horticulturalist Monty Don helps amateur gardeners on the south coast of England and in Showdown who are battling the elements as they attempt to create idyllic outdoor spaces. (R)

5.00 Wild Brazil The animals look for breeding partners. Last in the series. (R)

6.00 Flog It! Catherine Southon and Mark Stacey locate interesting items at St Petroc's Church in Bodmin, Cornwall. (R)

7.00 Tigers About the House - What Happened Next First of a two-part programme catching up with zookeeper Giles Clark and the Sumatran tiger cubs, he was hand-rearing in his home in the suburbs of Queensland.

8.00 Christmas University Challenge Two teams of distinguished graduates compete on behalf of their former universities in the first semi-final of the academic quiz's festive series. Jeremy Paxman hosts.

8.30 The Help (2011) Premiere. An aspiring journalist in 1960s Mississippi creates controversy by giving black servants the chance to tell their stories. Drama, starring Emma Stone and Viola Davis. **★ ★ ★**

10.50 Mock the Week New Year's Eve Special A selection of out-takes, quizzes and favourite clips. Last in the series.

11.20 Jools' Annual Hootenanny 2014 With Ronnie Spector, Ed Sheeran, Boz Scaggs, Paolo Nutini, Ellie Goulding, William Bell, Paloma Faith, Wilko Johnson, Joss Stone, Clean Bandit with Jess Glynne and Hayseed Dixie.

1.35 Glastonbury 2014 Highlights A selection of performances from the festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset. **3.40 This Is BBC Two**

3.25 Goldfinger (1964) James Bond adventure, starring Sean Connery. **★ ★ ★ ★**

5.35 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

6.30 ITV News Central; Weather.

6.45 ITV News and Weather

7.00 Emmerdale Samson finds one of Belle's pills and tells Zak and Lisa, Jimmy worries about Nicola when she heads straight back to work and Robert feels torn between Chrissie and Aaron.

7.30 Coronation Street Liz tells Steve he can borrow from the Rovers' account to pay his staff, David lets Michael move into No 8 after he is evicted and Gary apologises to Roy for breaking into the cafe.

8.00 Rita & Me Fifty years after Barbara Knox's first appearance on Coronation Street, this programme looks back on her character Rita's greatest moments on the cobbles.

9.00 A Funny Old Year 2014 Jason Manford presents this end-of-year comedy review show – a humorous celebration of the highs and lows of the past 12 months, from the brilliant to the infuriating.

10.00 Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This Biopic of the hugely popular comedian, who was in love with two women and unable to choose between them. Starring David Threlfall (Shameless), with Amanda Redman and Helen McCrory. (R)

11.55 ITV News and Weather and New Year's Bongs The headlines, followed by Big Ben.

12.10 FILM: Carry On Camping (1969) Two men hatch a plan to lure their unsuspecting girlfriends to a nudist camp and introduce them to a life of wild abandon. Bawdy comedy, starring Sid James. **★ ★ ★ 1.40 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA (R)** **2.25 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)**

4.20 Fantastic Mr Fox (2009) Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voice of George Clooney. **★ ★ ★**

6.00 The Simpsons Lisa tries to make amends for cheating in an exam, but the school authorities turn a deaf ear to her confession that she bought the answers from Nelson. (R)

6.30 Hollyoaks Hour-long episode. A desperate Nancy puts herself in danger, while Joe decides he must find out the truth about Freddie, and Robbie stands up to his dad.

7.30 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

8.00 Frozen at Christmas The makers of Disney's Frozen, the most successful animated film of all time, talk about its creation and production, and the writing and performance of its most popular songs. (R)

9.00 Alan Carr's New Year Spectacular The comedian is joined by Jonathan Ross, Gok Wan, Alesha Dixon, Mark Wright, James Corden, Caroline Flack and Seann Walsh, with music by Tulisa Contostavlos and Professor Green.

11.05 50 Funniest Moments 2014 Famous faces help count down the year's top 50 hilarious incidents across the worlds of TV, music, sport, politics and the internet – most of them unintentional. (R)

12.40 C4's 30 Greatest Comedy Shows Celebrating some of the station's most impressive comedy series, exploring the impact shows including Father Ted, Spaced and The Inbetweeners have had on British TV. (R) **2.30 The IT Crowd** Moss and Roy display curious symptoms. (R) **2.55 The IT Crowd** Jen deals with a difficult builder. (R) **3.20 The IT Crowd** Roy and Moss revel in their masculinity. (R) **3.50 Phil Spencer: Secret Agent (R)** **4.45 Kirstie's Handmade Treasures (R)** **4.55 Secret Eaters (R)** **5.50 How I Met Your Mother (R)**

3.10 The Dirty Dozen (1967) Second World War action adventure, with Lee Marvin. **★ ★ ★**

6.05 Tommy Cooper's Christmas Special Festive edition of the comic magician's show from 1974, featuring music by Dana and Vic Damone and a guest appearance by French puppeteer Andre Tahon. (R)

7.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away High Court enforcement officers Paul Bohill and Steve and Ben Pinner face their biggest eviction yet, as they take on squatters in a large central London office block; (R) **5 News Update**

8.00 World's Strongest Man 2014 Action from the fifth and final heat at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, which featured defending champion Brian Shaw and Britain's Graham Hicks; **5 News at 9**

9.00 Britain's Favourite Sitcoms Mel Giedroyc narrates a countdown of the nation's 50 best-loved TV comedies, as voted for by Channel 5 viewers in an online poll.

12.00 The Abba Years The success of the Swedish group, exploring the flamboyant outfits, hit records, successful spin-offs, marriages and break-ups. Featuring interviews with the band members. (R) **1.00 SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10 World's Strongest Man 2014** Action from the fourth and penultimate heat at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, which featured three-time champion Zydrunas Savickas. (R) **4.00 Great Scientists** The life and legacy of Charles Darwin, one of the most controversial scientists of all time, whose theory of evolution caused a storm in Victorian society. (R) **4.25 Chinese Food in Minutes** Steamed wine sea bass and a spicy beef dish. (R) **4.30 Chinese Food in Minutes** Ching-He Huang teaches two rugby players to prepare oriental dishes. (R) **4.45 House Doctor (R)** **5.10 House Doctor (R)** **5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)**

New Year's Day

BBC 1



Gary Lineker presents Match of the Day, shown at 10.35pm

6.00 Breakfast Round-up of national and international news, plus the latest from the money markets. **9.00 FILM: Bee Movie (2007)** Animated comedy, with the voice of Jerry Seinfeld. **★★★ 10.25 FILM: Over the Hedge (2006)** Animated comedy, with the voice of Bruce Willis. **★★★ 11.40 Life Story: The Full Circle** Highlights of the natural history series. **12.45 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message** By the Most Rev Justin Welby. **12.50 BBC News** **1.00 BBC Regional News;** Weather. **1.10 The Boy in the Dress** David Williams' story about a youngster who wants to be different. (R) **2.10 FILM: Mary Poppins (1964)** Disney musical fantasy, with Julie Andrews. **★★★★**

BBC 2



Jeremy Paxman hosts Christmas University Challenge, 8.30pm

6.15 Sign Zone: The Great Interior Design Challenge (R) 7.15 Sign Zone: Close Calls: On Camera (R) 7.45 Alec Guinness: Talking Pictures (R) 8.30 FILM: The Lavender Hill Mob (1951) (b/w) ★★★★★ 9.50 FILM: A Hard Day's Night (1964) (b/w) ★★★★★ 11.15 New Year's Day Concert Live from Vienna Coverage of the Vienna Philharmonic's traditional New Year's Day concert. **12.50 Snow Wolf Family and Me** Part one of two. Gordon Buchanan explores the lives and habits of Arctic wolves. (R) **1.50 Snow Wolf Family and Me** Part two of two. Gordon Buchanan follows the wolves as they hunt. (R) **2.50 FILM: Galaxy Quest (1999)** Sci-fi comedy, starring Tim Allen. **★★★**

ITV



New You've Been Framed! At Christmas, shown at 7.00pm

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 6.20 Pat & Stan (R) 6.30 Dino Dan (R) 6.55 Dino Dan (R) 7.00 Animals (R) 7.10 Sooty (R) 7.25 A Grizzly New Year's Tale (R) 7.55 Super 4 (R) 8.10 Super 4 (R) 8.25 Dinner Date Lucy from Surrey hopes to find love. (R) **9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show** 10.20 **Judge Rinder** Real-life cases in a studio courtroom. (R) **11.20 Who's Doing the Dishes?** Tricia Penrose plays host. (R) **12.25 All Star Family Fortunes** With Nadia Sawalha and Jane Cox. (R) **1.25 ITV News and Weather** 1.35 **Secret Dealers** The dealers bid on a Victorian silver-mounted scent bottle. **2.35 You've Been Framed!** Comedy clips, including a cat that refuses to be put down. (R)

Ch4



Alex Zane presents Rude Tube Welcome to 2015, shown at 10.30pm

6.15 FILM: The Three Worlds of Gulliver (1960) Fantasy adventure, starring Kerwin Mathews. **★★★ 7.55 FILM: The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (1958)** The wily sailor pits his wits against an evil magician to save a princess on an island inhabited by hideous monsters. Fantasy adventure, starring Kerwin Mathews and Kathryn Grant. **★★★★ 9.45 The Big Bang Theory** Penny arranges a date for Raj. (R) **10.10 The Big Bang Theory** Sheldon's old adversary Wil Wheaton returns. (R) **10.40 The Simpsons** Marge recalls how she met Homer. (R) **11.10 FILM: The Last Mimzy (2007)** Children's fantasy, starring Chris O'Neil. **★★★★ 1.00 Channel 4 Racing** Nick Luck presents live coverage of six races.

Ch5



Andy and Maggie Robin feature, Hercules the Human Bear, 7.30pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.45 Access Showbiz news and gossip. (R) **10.00 World's Strongest Man 2014** Action from the fifth and final heat at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, which featured defending champion Brian Shaw and Britain's Graham Hicks. (R) **11.00 FILM: The Dam Busters (1954)** An engineer designs an ingenious bouncing bomb to destroy major dams in Germany's industrial heartland. Fact-based Second World War drama, with Michael Redgrave. (b/w) **★★★★ 1.25 FILM: The Italian Job (1969)** A crook recruits a gang to steal \$4million in gold bullion and make a quick getaway from central Turin in a fleet of Minis. Crime comedy, starring Michael Caine. **★★★★**

4.25 The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn (2011) Premiere. A reporter goes on a globetrotting quest to find a sunken ship containing a pirate's lost treasure. Animated adventure, with the voices of Jamie Bell and Andy Serkis. **★★★★**

6.05 BBC News
6.20 Midlands Today; Weather.

6.30 Roald Dahl's Esio Trot Dustin Hoffman and Judi Dench star in this adaptation of Roald Dahl's story about retired bachelor Mr Hoppy, who hits upon a cunning plan to romance his neighbour Mrs Silver.

8.00 Miranda The very last episode of the hit sitcom sees the shopkeeper making one final attempt to accept herself and find contentment. Miranda Hart stars, with Patricia Hodge and Tom Ellis.

8.30 EastEnders Hour-long episode. After the drama of Christmas, the good folk of Walford turn their attention to the new year - and things get off to an explosive start.

9.35 Mrs Brown's Boys The second of two festive episodes. Agnes increases her home security after a spate of local burglaries, while Cathy is feeling broody, giving lovelorn Buster Brady an idea.

10.10 BBC News
10.25 BBC Regional News; Weather.

10.35 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Tottenham Hotspur v Chelsea at White Hart Lane and Southampton v Arsenal at St Mary's Stadium.

12.10 Tony Bennett & Lady Gaga: Cheek to Cheek Live! The unlikely music duo take to the stage in New York. (R) **1.05 FILM: Road Trip (2000)** Comedy, starring Breckin Meyer, Tom Green and Seann William Scott. **★★★ 2.35 Skiing** Weatherview **2.40 BBC News**

4.25 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message By the Most Rev Justin Welby. (R)

4.30 Final Score A round-up of this afternoon's football results.

5.30 Force 10 from Navarone (1978) A commando mission to destroy a bridge in the Balkans that is vital to the Nazis is jeopardised by a traitor. Second World War adventure sequel, with Harrison Ford and Robert Shaw. **★★**

7.30 Tigers About the House - What Happened Next Part two of two. The Clarks see the harsh reality of tiger poaching in Indonesia, while Spot faces an operation that may end with him losing all vision.

8.30 Christmas University Challenge Two teams of distinguished graduates compete on behalf of their former universities in the second semi-final of the festive edition of the academic quiz. Jeremy Paxman hosts.

9.00 Quartet (2012) Premiere. Three former opera singers' plans for a fundraising concert for their retirement home are disrupted by a new arrival. Comedy drama, with Maggie Smith and Billy Connolly. **★★★★**

10.30 Julie Walters: A Life on Screen The actress chats about her career, from her beginnings in theatre through to her successes in TV and film. With contributions by Victoria Wood, Celia Imrie and Hugh Bonneville. (R)

11.30 Mock the Week New Year's Eve Special Dara O Briain presents a selection of out-takes, quizzes and favourite clips. Last in the series. (R)

12.05 FILM: Frenzy (1972) Thriller, starring John Fynch. **★★★★ 1.55 FILM: Stick It (2006)** Comedy, starring Missy Peregrym. **★★★★ 2.35 This Is BBC Two**

3.05 Thunderball (1965) James Bond sets out to foil a plot by crime syndicate Spectre to detonate two nuclear warheads off the US coast. Spy adventure, with Sean Connery, Claudine Auger and Adolfo Celi. **★★★**

5.45 Rita & Me Barbara Knox looks back on her 50-year career on Coronation Street. (R)

6.45 ITV News and Weather
7.00 New You've Been Framed! At Christmas Harry Hill narrates a festive selection of comedy clips, featuring a photo-bombing reindeer, an explosive chimney and a squirrel wrecking his neighbour's Christmas lights. (R)

7.30 Emmerdale Hour-long episode. Belle persuades Lachlan to try one of the pills, but he struggles with the effects and takes a turn for the worse. Harriet tells Finn she has news about his mum.

8.30 Birds of a Feather Sharon amazes the others with her high IQ, and Dorien, under pressure to find a heroine for her next book, decides to push her toward a surprising new career.

9.00 The Dark Knight (2008) Premiere. Batman is pushed to breaking point as criminal mastermind the Joker plunges Gotham City into chaos. Comic-book thriller sequel, with Christian Bale and Heath Ledger. **★★★★**

11.55 ITV News and Weather
12.00 The Cube A Londoner hopes to win enough money to take his family to Australia, while a police officer from the West Midlands thinks she is tough enough to walk away with the jackpot. (R) **12.50 Jackpot247** Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA (R) 3.40 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)**

3.30 Guy Martin's Passion for Life Documentary following the life of the motorcycle racer and lorry mechanic. (R)

4.00 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

4.10 The Wizard of Oz (1939) A tornado whisks a girl off to a magical land where she embarks on a journey in search of the wizard who knows the way home. Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland and Ray Bolger. **★★★★**

6.10 Sister Act (1992) A nightclub singer is sent to live in a convent for her own protection after agreeing to testify against a brutal gangster. Comedy, starring Whoopi Goldberg and Harvey Keitel. Edited for language. **★★★**

8.00 Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) Premiere. A princess joins forces with the warrior sent to kill her to overthrow an evil queen. Fantasy adventure, starring Kristen Stewart, Chris Hemsworth and Charlize Theron. Edited for violence. **★★★**

10.30 Rude Tube Welcome to 2015 Alex Zane explores the 100 most popular internet videos of the past 12 months in a two-hour special, featuring the spider-dog prank.

12.35 FILM: The Godfather (1972) A crime boss entrusts control of his business to his three sons after an attempt is made on his life. Francis Ford Coppola's gangster drama, starring Marlon Brando. **★★★★**

3.30 Trans World Sport Including a profile of wheelchair rugby in Australia, the Carolina-Duke-US college basketball rivalry and an interview with Goran Ivanisevic. **4.30 Phil Spencer: Secret Agent** The property expert helps a couple on the Wirral whose five-bedroom semi looks like a student residence. (R) **5.25 Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites (R) 5.40 Small Animal Hospital (R)**

3.30 Ben-Hur (1959) A Jewish prince is betrayed by his Roman friend and sold into slavery, but returns years later to seek revenge. Oscar-winning epic, starring Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd. **★★★★**

7.30 Hercules the Human Bear The story of Andy and Maggie Robin's 25-year relationship with a grizzly bear they bought as a cub from an Aviemore zoo, and which went on to become a star of TV and films. (R)

8.30 World's Strongest Man 2014 Action from the Grand Final at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, which featured the 12 qualifiers from the five heats. Last in the series. **5 News Update**

9.35 White Dee: What's All the Fuss About? Dee Kelly reveals how appearing on Benefits Street changed her life, leading to new-found fame and featuring public appearances, photoshoots, newspaper interviews and politics.

10.35 Celeb Big Brother: The Good, the Bad and the Unforgettable Emma Willis narrates a selection of memorable moments from the reality show, including George Galloway pretending to be a cat and Lionel Blair dressed in bondage gear.

12.35 Jim Davidson: At Least I'm Not Boring The comedian gives an insight into the highs and lows of his colourful personal and professional life, from hosting The Generation Game to appearing in Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **1.35 SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **4.00 Wildlife SOS** The work of volunteers at an animal sanctuary. (R) **4.20 Wildlife SOS** The work of volunteers at an animal sanctuary. (R) **4.45 House Doctor** Ann Maurice helps a couple sell their three-bedroom detached house. (R) **5.10 House Doctor (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)**

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The Vauxhall Corsa has a renowned reputation for its driving experience as well as being one of the most economical cars on the road.

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Vauxhall Corsa Limited Edition 1.3 CDTi 3-dr

If diesel is your requirement then take a look at the Corsa Limited Edition 1.3 CDTi 3-dr. At just £12,995 you

will be saving £3,170 off the recommended retail price.

This Corsa comes with pre-registration delivery mileage, a body kit, 17 inch alloy wheels, body coloured front lower spoiler, side skirts and rear spoiler, front fog lamps, air conditioning and cruise control.

Safety-wise, the Corsa Limited Edition comes with six air bags and ABS is standard of course, and when you activate it above 18mph, the brake lights flash to warn following cars.

Should your airbags deploy, the hazards will flash too.

This is a formidable package for the price and with its reliable and economical diesel engine, this Corsa Limited Edition is just great value for money too.

Vauxhall Corsa VX-R 1.6i Turbo 192PS 3-dr

For those of a sporting nature, take a look at the Corsa VX-R 1.6i Turbo 192PS 3-dr. This is an opportunity to own a remarkable car with a renowned pedigree.

For just £229.55 per month on a personal contract hire package you could be driving away in this fabulous car.

It comes with air conditioning, cruise control, CD/MP3 CD player with USB/aux in socket and stereo radio, Recaro shell-backed sports seats and VX-R front fog lights with alloy reflective surrounds.

Some of the detailing both inside and out is exquisite and Vauxhall has certainly pulled out the stops to differentiate the



'This is a formidable package for the price and with its reliable and economical diesel engine, this Corsa Limited Edition is just great value for money.'

VX-R from humbler Corsa offerings. The cabin is dominated by the specially-designed shell-backed Recaro seats which offer outstanding support and comfort.

The flat-bottomed steering wheel is another upmarket feature that will set the enthusiast's heart aflutter and you have the general build quality of the standard Corsa which is as good as anything in the segment.

Vauxhall has done a thorough job of making this Corsa VX-R feel special.

Whichever way you look at it, it's obviously no ordinary Corsa and at the wheel, its power and poise never fail to entertain.

It's the car's ability to deliver indecent pace when roused but still remain comparatively mild-mannered in everyday circumstances that marks the Corsa VX-R 1.6i Turbo out. It's not the absolute head-case that its styling suggests and beneath that snarling bodywork is a comfortable, beautifully-detailed interior that you'll rarely tire of sitting in.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Lowest: Vauxhall Corsa 3 Door Hatchback 1.2i 85PS 16v Excite A/C with 14", 15" and 16" wheels, M5: Urban: 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban: 62.8 (4.5), Combined: 51.4 (5.5). CO₂ emissions: 129g/km. Highest: Vauxhall Corsa 3 dr Hatchback 1.6i 16V 192PS VXR Turbo (A/C) with 17" wheels, M6: Urban: 28.8 (9.8), Extra-urban: 47.9 (5.9), Combined: 38.7 (7.3). CO₂ emissions: 172g/km

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Titan Plant Hire in Bilston is a part of the Gill Group of companies. It specialises in supplying logistical support for all of the group, especially the large-scale projects carried out by the Gill Civil Engineering arm. This includes laying vast areas of concrete at airports and marine ports around the country. And transporting staff to and from project destinations.

Mark Woodward manages Titan Plant Hire and he has a busy schedule supporting the needs of such a large and diverse company. He explains the range of support provided: "We have a trouble-shooting and rapid response role within the Gill Group. Our main focus is to supply Gill Civil Engineering with plant, but that brings with it the need for maintenance schedules, operator's licences, tachograph recordings and other related regulatory activities to keep the business working."

"The range of jobs is immense and we operate across the UK."

Positive

"We have a fleet of trucks fitted with cranes and many personnel carriers to transport our staff, and these come from Greenhouse Commercials in Willenhall with who we have a long and positive relationship."

"Greenhouse DAF has supplied Titan with two 18T, one 12T and two 26T trucks fitted with new remote Hiab cranes which will make our loading and unloading operations faster and more efficient, and with new engine technology which produces lower emissions and better fuel economy of up to 20 per cent, we will reduce our company's carbon footprint."

Titan has a further two 26T and two 18T trucks on order for delivery this month. The order book for new work is very healthy, showing the signs of economic recovery are certainly tangible in terms of infrastructure construction.

Mark reflects on what he is looking for in the vehicles he purchases from Greenhouse. "We need robust, reliable vehicles with a very good fuel economy and we get this with our fleet of DAF and Vauxhall vehicles. With the new fleet we will maximise



'We need robust, reliable vehicles with a very good fuel economy'

the efficiency of our deliveries, but also improve the safety for pedestrians and our staff. The high level of customer service we get from the staff at Greenhouse DAF is a major reason why we deal with the company."

Titan employs a lot of staff on projects and so it needs pick-ups, minibuses and vans to transport staff and tools around the country.

Its fleet is continually refreshed and it

has around 20 Vauxhall vehicles at present provided through Greenhouse Vauxhall Commercial in Willenhall.

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3 Home & Services

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6 Property

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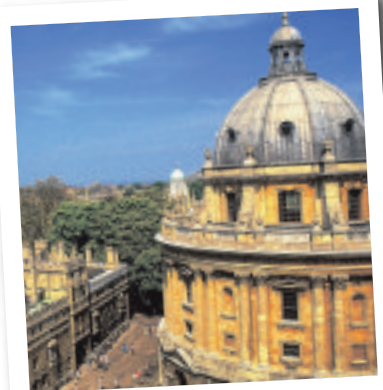
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Battling swim squad in fourth

SWIMMERS from Halesowen Swimming Club went to Leamington Spa for the final round of the West Midlands National League.

The premier league was as strong as ever with similar strength teams looking to grab the honours. Halesowen battled hard throughout the gala and by the halfway mark were in contention for a good finish.

Despite some battling performances and a runaway win in the final men's relay Halesowen had to settle for fourth spot.

Star of the show was treble winner Chloe Finch in the individual medley, butterfly and freestyle and double winners James Cuthbert in the breaststroke and butterfly and Richard Spoor in the individual medley and breaststroke.

Other individual event winners were Lily Merrell in the breaststroke, Josh Bradley in the backstroke and Mark Laing in the freestyle.

The girls, aged 13 and under freestyle team including India Hanke, Amber Harrison and Kate Morrice won and the open men's team won both freestyle and medley relays including Jacob Darby, Michael Edmonds and Luke Morris.

Villa blow as Ashley is injured

ASTON Villa midfielder Ashley Westwood has been ruled out for up to four weeks with medial ligament damage, the Barclays Premier League club have announced.

The 24-year-old carried off on a stretcher during the 2-1 win over Leicester following a strong tackle by Jamie Vardy.

Villa were confident the injury was not as bad as first feared but the former Crewe player will still miss up to five games.

Westwood has been a key man for Villa manager Paul Lambert since signing from The Railwaymen in 2012 and set up Ciaran Clark's equaliser against the Foxes.

He adds to a lengthy injury list.

So far, so good, says boss of Heathens

CRADLEY boss Will Pottinger says it's a case of 'so far, so good' with the club's team building in preparation for the new season and their new home for coming year.

The Heathens, who will race home meetings at Birmingham's Perry Barr Stadium on Wednesday next year, have unveiled Nathan Greaves, Luke Harris, Mike Neale and Ellis Perks.

At the club's Christmas Party at Cradley Heath Liberal Club they were due to announce to supporters their new captain who was expected to be there.

Pottinger said: "I'm delighted with the way the team has come together, it's a case

Speedway

of so far, so good I feel. We have a team of riders coming together who can all improve their average and I'm looking forward to working with them.

"Nathan can kick on with another point on his average and as for Luke, Mike and Ellis they will all be new to the National League but they've done enough in occasional appearances to suggest they are capable of big things," added the club boss.

"The one down side is that we have lost

Tom Perry, I know that was a tough call for the management but something had to give at the top end of the team with the 36-point limit in place.

"We now have three riders to complete the side and we know who our captain will be but we want to present him to our loyal supporters at the Christmas Party night.

"There's a lot to live up to after the success of the last two seasons and we have lost a big home track advantage by moving from Wolverhampton to Perry Barr, but in many ways we are looking forward to it.

"It will be a big challenge and we certainly won't be having it all our own way

like we did last season when we only lost one meeting all season," added Pottinger.

"It's going to be an exciting season, especially with Birmingham and Eastbourne coming into the league from the Elite League."

For the fans wanting to save a little money after the festivities then season tickets are still available at the discounted early bird prices up to and including January 31.

Also the application forms can be downloaded from www.cradleyheathens.co which is the club's official website which also carries more information, news and updates about the club.

Hitman Leon stops the rot for Wolves

Sheffield Weds 0 Wolves 1
HILLSBOROUGH, it seems, is a very lucky hunting ground for Wolves.

On Saturday Kenny Jackett's side needed that good fortune to get to half-time still in the game. On another day, Wednesday would have been out of sight before the break, striker Stevie May guilty of missing clear-cut chances.

Defender Glenn Loovens also missed heading narrowly wide.

This was never going to be an easy fixture for the Molineux men, with the latest form book against them. The Owls, managed by former Wolves assistant Stuart Gray, had recorded back-to-back wins and that confidence showed in a first half in which they dominated.

But step forward head coach Jackett for two pieces of managerial magic.

Firstly, whatever the boss said to his players at half-time worked as Wolves came flying out of the traps with Rajiv van La Parra having two glorious chances to put the away side ahead.

The team-talk had transformed the match into a contest, but it was with six minutes to go that Jackett showed a golden touch.

Former Owl Leon Clarke came on to replace Danny Graham and within 30 seconds he had won the game.

With his first touch, the unmarked striker tapped home a wonderful Kevin McDonald cross to send the travelling Wolves faithful wild.

Clarke is somewhat earning himself a reputation as a Yorkshire assassin with his only other league goal

Football

coming in the 85th minute against Leeds to secure another last-gasp victory.

But while both goals have secured three precious Championship points, this one should prove much more significant. The confidence-sapping run of five straight defeats has been well and truly put to bed.

And with an encouraging second-half performance to build on, morale is now back on the rise.

In a bid to address the recent decline, Jackett made one enforced change to the side that lost 2-1 at Bournemouth.

Teenager Kortney Hause came in at left-back for his full Wolves debut in place of the suspended Matt Docherty.

But the 19-year-old almost had a debut to instantly forget when, inside the first 20 seconds, Chris Maguire tricked his way past him and sent in a cross which found Tom Lees in the box. With the Owls fans screaming for him to shoot, Lees looked to play the ball across the box to Atde Nuhui but Danny Bath was on hand to block.

Lewis takes pole position in BBC awards



Winner of Sports Personality of the Year 2014, Formula 1 driver Lewis Hamilton

FORMULA 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton is this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

He pipped golfer Roy McIlroy and 41-year-old European 10,000m champion Jo Pavey to the award.

It was presented to Mercedes driver Hamilton - who won his second world championship this year in a dramatic finale in Abu Dhabi - by Kenny Dalglish and Johnny Wilkinson at a star-studded ceremony in

Glasgow. On accepting the award Hamilton said: "I am so speechless. I really couldn't have done this without my amazing team."

There were several awards dished out earlier in the evening including Coach of the Year, which went to victorious Ryder Cup winning captain Paul McGinley.

Team of the Year went to the England's Women's Rugby World Cup team, who beat Canada 21-9 in this

year's final and end a run of three successive final defeats in Paris in the process.

Prodigious young gymnast Claudia Fragapane scooped the Young Sports Personality of the Year award.

The 17-year-old was the first British woman in 84 years to win four gold medals at one Commonwealth Games. Overseas Sports Personality of the Year went to Cristiano Ronaldo.

Mason, Dixon line is drawn

Hereford Lads 2
Team Dudley 1

TEAM Dudley were edged out 2-1 by Hereford Lads Club in West Midlands Division One after playing with 10 men for more than an hour.

Ryan Spittle put the visitors in front on 19 minutes but lost Jahmal Patterson to a red card after a strong challenge nine minutes later.

Danny Mason headed an equaliser on 40 minutes and Steve Dixon scored Hereford's winner midway through the second half.

Hereford were able to enjoy greater possession of the ball and despite admirable defending Hereford brought the game equal on 40 minutes when a fine cross was met by the head of Mason.

Hereford were out the traps early in the second half and it took a Liam Jones save with his legs to keep parity.

Despite being a man down TD were defending resolutely but were undone when a clever inside pass saw Captain Steve Dixon beat the advancing Jones to give Hereford the lead on 66 minutes.

TD provided a threat and on 73 minutes from a keeper miss clearance saw the ball eventually fall to safety.

Top table clash ends all square

AFC Ludlow 1
Wren's Nest FC 1

WREN'S Nest put in a great show in this top of the table clash.

Wren's Nest went ahead with a goal by Matthew Bird after 28 minutes following a great through-ball from Jake Mullen. Both teams went close in the first half but both defences held out until the break.

In the second half AFC Ludlow equalised after 70 minutes with a goal by Dale Hodge.

Wren's went close at the finish when a Joe Lawley free-kick rattled the post and Matthew Bird had a great chance to win the match but hit his shot straight at the AFC Ludlow keeper.



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Clarke gets Wolves
back to winning ways
Page 31

Pole position
Lewis is top in TV
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Club in swoop to grab Perry

BIRMINGHAM have swooped to make Cradley star Tom Perry their third signing for the club's new era next March.

The signing will add spice to the rivalry between the two clubs, who will both be racing home meetings at Perry Barr Stadium at National League level next season.

Perry was frozen out of Cradley's team plans when the points limit was reduced at last week's National League AGM – and the Brummies swooped.

He joins Adam Ellis and Zach Wajtknecht in an exciting side for what promises to be an exciting season – especially when the Brummies and Heathens meet.

Perry said: "I'm delighted to be joining Birmingham."

"I had a feeling my average wouldn't fit at Cradley and they gave me permission to talk to Birmingham as soon as the AGM finished last week."

"It's nice to be fixed up and I'm really excited about the Brummies."

"A lot of people are going to say we're top heavy but if the management can pull off a few of the signings they've got in mind to go with the three of us then I think we've got a really good chance of being in contention."

Villa blow at Ashley injury

ASTON Villa midfielder Ashley Westwood has been ruled out for up to four weeks with medial ligament damage, the Barclays Premier League club have announced.

The 24-year-old carried off on a stretcher during the 2-1 win over Leicester following a strong tackle by Jamie Vardy.

Villa were confident the injury was not as bad as first feared but the former Crewe player will still miss up to five games.

Westwood has been a key man for Villa manager Paul Lambert since signing from The Railwaymen in 2012 and set up Ciaran Clark's equaliser against the Foxes.

He adds to a lengthy injury list and joins defenders Nathan Baker (knee) and Ron Vlaar and Philippe Senderos (both calf) on the sidelines while striker Libor Kozak has a broken leg.

Geldart strikes twice to trouble Tipton

Tipton Town 2 Heath Hayes 3

CHRIS Geldart netted twice as Heath Hayes boosted their survival hopes with a 3-2 win at fellow strugglers Tipton Town.

Hosts Tipton were left trailing in the visitors' wake in a keenly-contested local derby as defeat left them at the foot of the Midland Premier League. Heath Hayes now have a six-point gap over the bottom two.

Tipton, however, had struck first after just four minutes when a flag-kick from the right was powerfully headed home by central defender Paul Henley.

The visitors, undeterred, threatened

Football

quickly with Danny Scragg spearing a firm header just over and it was 1-1 after eight minutes.

A searching cross from the right undid the home defence and Geldart equalised from close in.

Both sides tried to take charge as the action flowed end to end. Kyle Sheppard firing narrowly off target for Tipton.

Luke Wright was setting a fine example to his Heath Hayes colleagues with some

powerful play that was helping to turn the tide in his side's favour and they took the lead in the 17th minute.

Joe Pickering cottoned on to a precision pass, enabling him to draw home keeper, Matt Martin, off his goal-line before accurately driving the ball past him.

Tipton rallied briefly, Sean Pugh freeing Ben Hadley but his shot passed a foot or so wide as the home club desperately sought to regain the initiative.

Most of the forward play was now being dictated by the visitors. Scragg was again to the fore but, with a goal seemingly a for-

mality, he drove wildly over the top in the 26th minute.

Soon after the start of the second half, Pickering took advantage of some wayward play in the home defence but, with a third goal seeming a certainty for the now-dominant visitors, he fired just over.

In the 62nd minute Geldart netted his second, to put the visitors 3-1 in front and, in control of the game.

With injury time being played Ben Hadley scrambled a goal back for Tipton from close-range through a packed goalmouth but the visitors clung on to the points.

DOMINANT HINCKS TAKE DOWN HALES

Hinckley 51 Old Hales 6

THIS Hinckley side is getting better week by week and in this game they were dominant.

They overwhelmed an Old Hales side that would have moved into second place in the league had they won. The collective group skills of the Hinckley front five, the back row, the half backs and the vastly improved back line were on display throughout the game.

With only the ever-aggressive Tom Jordan, Jay Martin, Nigel Burrows and Matt Williams prepared to stand toe to toe with abrasive opponents. Burrows received a yellow card along with the Hinckley Hooker, Coltman mid-way through the second half.

A half time score of 25-6 in Hinckley's favour with three tries in the bag confirmed Hinckley's dominance with three tries, two of which were catch and drives in the line from their towering second rows.

Rolling

Hinckley's fourth and bonus point try came by their hooker, again a rolling maul. The pressure continued, with ex-Tigers full back Mitch Culpin scoring try number five.

A sixth was added as the Hales pack disintegrated. Finally the game was completed as the Hinckley pack rumbled Old Hales back over our own line for another try.

A final conversion completed the scoring for a very comprehensive Hinckley

Rugby

victory.

Following a convincing win last week against weaker opposition in Dudley Kingswinford, Old Hales need to regroup and set about preparing for some difficult physical teams to play in the new year.

Old Halesonians 2nds 33 Stoke on Trent 2nds 33

Following the midweek cry off from Silhillians, Old Hales were pleased to accept the offer of a game against Stoke.

Unfortunately the Stoke side was depleted at the last minute.

The captains agreed a 12-a-side format with uncontested scrums.

Stoke dominated possession in the early stages and capitalised with a well worked try. From the restart Hales hit back as Alex Church scored.

Stoke grabbed a converted try from long range. Hales hit back and hooker Bobby Moxon made it over for a try, Andy Tromans converted.

Shortly after the restart James Mitchell took a quick tap and off to score. Tromans converted.

Glassboys are shattered by extra time goals



Luke Benbow put the Glassboys on the scoreboard first but they eventually went down to Rushall

Stourbridge 3 Rushall 5

STOURBRIDGE bowed out of the Birmingham Senior Cup eclipsed by Rushall Olympic's five-star show.

Pics pulled off a thrilling 5-3 win in extra time in the first round tie at the War Memorial Ground. Glassboys grabbed a fourth minute lead when Luke Benbow headed Brian Smikle's cross into the top corner of the net.

Rushall replied after 33 minutes

when Jake Heath played a ball down the right flank which tempted Stourbridge's second string goalkeeper Dominic Hill to dash off his line – but he was beaten to the ball by Ramone Stephens who slotted home to level the scores and really get the contest under way.

Stephens then grabbed his second when he fired Rushall in front on 41 minutes. Stourbridge kept the tie alive with a dramatic 93rd minute

leveller. Skipper Leon Broadhurst was instrumental in setting up the chance for Jordan Fitzpatrick to force home despite the despairing efforts of Pics goalkeeper Richard Jones.

Just two minutes into extra time, Stephens completed his hat-trick. But Stourbridge levelled things up through Josh Morgan-Parker.

Rushall wrapped up the tie with two goals from Aaron Williams.

Wolves - a work in progress

KENNY JACKETT has admitted that Wolves are still a work in progress.

The head coach believes being a 'surprise package' to the rest of the Championship helped last season's League One champions begin the season in roaring form.

But five defeats in a row suggested they had been found out before the win at Sheffield Wednesday proved the Molineux men have learned some tough lessons.

"One result can turn a poor run but I wouldn't say we are necessarily there yet," said the head coach.

"We can't say at the moment we're a force in the division. We want to be a force – that's our aim. We want to make sure we build a side that is good enough to do that."

"It's been a case of adjusting to the league. Early on, clubs didn't know us. Since then, we've hit a period where sides worked us out and we had to adjust again."

"I hope we've proved we can keep doing that."

"You have to dig deep, you have to be resilient and in football you always have to bounce back."

Spireites must replay MK Dons

THE FA has ruled Chesterfield must replay their FA Cup second-round tie with MK Dons.

The Spireites beat the Dons 1-0, but after the game admitted a charge of fielding an ineligible player, George Margreitter.

Margreitter played despite not completing the necessary paperwork.

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